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JOSEPH JENKINS;

OR, *Huby Wilson Jones*

LEAVES FROM THE LIFE

OF A

LITERARY MAN.

BY THE AUTHOR OF

“RANDOM RECOLLECTIONS,” “THE
GREAT METROPOLIS,”

&c. &c.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

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PREFACE.

THE Author appears, on this occasion, in a new walk of literature. The hero he has chosen for his volumes has little of that romance in his character which is usually to be found in the heroes of modern novels. Such personages as Joseph Jenkins are everywhere to be met with; and that is the main reason why the Author has made him the hero of his pages. The leading design of the book will, it is hoped, be evident to all. It is to point out the necessity of moral and religious principles, even to present happiness. It only remains to be added, that though

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the incidents recorded in these volumes did not take place in the precise order which the Author has assigned them, nor, in every instance, in the experience of the persons with whom he has connected them—they have this recommendation in their favour, that they are, one and all, founded on fact.

London, Nov. 1842.

CONTENTS.

CHAPTER I.

	PAGE
Introductory notice of our hero—Death of his mother —His arrival in London—The impression which the external aspect of the metropolis makes on his mind . . .	1

CHAPTER II.

Visits Cogers' Hall—Account of the origin, appearance, and nature of the place—A ludicrous incident . . .	12
--	----

CHAPTER III.

Joseph, seeing the necessity, resolves to do something for his own support—Determines, with that view, on the publication of a poem entitled "The Universe"— Calls on the prince of publishers, to offer him the manuscript—Is disappointed in not obtaining an inter- view—Returns home, and sends the manuscript for the bibliopole's inspection—The result	32
---	----

CHAPTER IV.

PAGE

Though disappointed with the result of his first effort to dispose of his poem, Joseph renews the attempt with another eminent publisher—Waits on, and is admitted to an interview with, the latter—His mode of dealing with authors—The nature and result of the interview	43
---	----

CHAPTER V.

Makes a third attempt to get a purchaser for his manuscript—Fails as before—Resolves to publish the work on his own account—Some secrets worth knowing respecting authorship and publishing—Extent of the sale of "The Universe"	52
--	----

CHAPTER VI.

Joseph determines for ever to abjure writing poetry, and never again to publish on his own account—Wishes to become a parliamentary reporter	69
--	----

CHAPTER VII.

Is received on trial for the situation named in the previous chapter—Feelings consequent on a first attempt at parliamentary reporting—Succeeds in getting a permanent engagement	78
---	----

CHAPTER VIII.

Duties of a parliamentary reporter—Joseph attends the meetings of a political association—Character of the leading speakers—Amusing incident—Close of the public career of the principal demagogues	82
---	----

CONTENTS.

vii

CHAPTER IX.

PAGE

Importance of a proper religious education—Mr. Jenkins' want of it—Consequences of neglecting the outward means of religion—Interview with Mr. Lovegood and Joseph on the subject	111
---	-----

CHAPTER X.

Becomes an infidel—Causes of infidelity—Wretchedness of an infidel creed—General remarks	120
--	-----

CHAPTER XI.

Joseph extends his acquaintance with authors and publishers—A dinner scene—Unpleasant discoveries on the following day	128
--	-----

CHAPTER XII.

Forms another engagement—Writes leading articles for two papers of opposite politics—An awkward mistake—Its consequences	143
--	-----

CHAPTER XIII.

Joseph forms a new literary engagement—Corrupt state of literary criticism in the metropolis—Sketches of the leading literary critics in London	160
---	-----

CHAPTER XIV.

Farther observations on the corrupt state of literary criticism in the metropolis—Authors of title or standing in society—The way in which they contrive to get favourable notices of their books—Literary coteries—General observations	185
--	-----

CHAPTER XV.

	PAGE
Mr. Lovegood brings out a new work—Conversation between him and Joseph on reviewing books in the periodicals of the day	210

CHAPTER XVI.

Joseph is taken seriously ill—Neglect of his acquaintances—Ingratitude—Conversation with Mr. Lovegood on the arguments in favour of and against Christianity	219
--	-----

CHAPTER XVII.

Is restored to health—Effect of the conversation with Mr. Lovegood described in the last chapter—Visits Hastings	260
--	-----

CHAPTER XVIII.

Joseph attends, from motives of curiosity, a Socialist meeting—The principles promulgated—Mr. Hatchet's speech—Its effects	270
--	-----

JOSEPH JENKINS.

CHAPTER I.

Introductory notice of our hero—Death of his mother—His arrival in London—The impression which the external aspect of the metropolis makes on his mind.

JOSEPH JENKINS was born in a small village, which it is needless to name, in the county of Moray, a district in the north of Scotland equally remarkable for the beauty of its landscapes and the salubrity of its climate. The lowland portions of the county possess an aspect of loveliness, in that season of the year when the trees are loaded with foliage, and the fields are luxuriant with corn and grass, which is hardly to be surpassed, and seldom equalled, by any scenery within the limits of our sea-girt shores. And, from some of the more elevated

situations in Morayshire, the prospect is as extensive as it is pleasant. From the summit of the hill, now called Quarrywood, though its original name was Quarrelwood, the eye can take in, at one glance, no fewer than nine counties. Nor is its vision, even then, circumscribed by the intervention of physical objects: it is only because the eye possesses not the power of extending its vision farther, that its range is thus limited: it literally loses itself in the immensity of space.

Having a lively perception, and an exquisite relish for the beauties of nature, Joseph Jenkins was in the habit of feasting his vision, for entire days, in the season of summer, on the lovely panorama spread before him, as he seated himself on the summit of Quarrywood. He not only possessed a cultivated literary taste, but had much of the ardour and sanguine temperament of the poet in his composition. His fond imagination clothed his prospects in life—though prospects, properly speaking, he had none—

with all the brightness and beauty of colour exhibited by the rainbow. He looked through the vista of futurity, and it was as pleasant to his mental eye as the lovely landscapes which graced the place of his nativity, were to his physical vision. He dreamed not of the possibility of his path of life containing so much as one solitary thorn; he pictured it to himself as a path which, from the beginning to the end, he would find strewn with flowers, soft to the feet, delightful to the eye, and fragrant to the smell.

And yet he had no independency on which to rely; he had not even a moderate competency to which he might look forward, as sure to afford him a refuge from want. He had been educated, and hitherto supported, on an annuity of 120*l.*; which his mother received from Government, in virtue of her deceased husband having been an officer in the army. Being an only son, he was the idol of his mother's heart; every comfort which her means could procure was enjoyed

by him; and in the north of Scotland, where provisions of all kinds, fuel, house-rent, &c., are exceedingly cheap, a little sum, with judicious management, can be made to go a great length. If even in England, where living is more expensive, Goldsmith's poor curate was passing rich with his forty pounds a year, it may easily be believed that, with three times that sum, Joseph Jenkins and his mother were able to make a highly respectable appearance in a remote part of Scotland. With the latter, however, the pension died; and, as she had lived up to her income, there was no expectancy for her son. The possibility of the death of the maternal parent, though he had been furnished with what ought to have proved a striking illustration of the uncertainty of life by the death, in his eighteenth year, of his father, seems never to have occurred to Joseph. It is passing strange, apart from the religious aspects of the question, that, at the very moment we are surrounded with the emblems of death,

and when the graves of departed friends can scarcely be said to be closed on our view, we are not only insensible to those solemn considerations which are associated with the uncertainty of life, but even entirely overlook the fact that our death, and the deaths of surviving friends, must, sooner or later, succeed the dissolution of the friends that have gone before us. The author of "Night Thoughts" represents unreflecting man as considering himself immortal, while aware that all others are mortal. The observation admits of a more extended application. We often fondly fancy that the friends we most ardently love are immortal, as well as ourselves; or, which is practically the same thing, we forget that they, like the rest of mankind, must one day sicken and die, and vanish from our society and our sight.

But though the loss of Joseph's father, and the daily dissolution of others around him, never opened his eyes to the possibility of his mother's being some day suddenly snatched from

him, and to the *certainty* of the event which happeneth to all, happening one day to her; his forgetfulness of that event did not defer it for even one little hour. She died within ten days of the twenty-fourth anniversary of his birth.

Thus thrown on his own resources, the question now forced itself, for the first time, on his serious attention—What was to be done to procure a livelihood? He had, as has already been remarked, a taste for literary pursuits; he was a young man of accurate and varied information, and he possessed considerable facility in the art of composition; some of his manuscript productions had been highly commended by competent judges: and the upshot was, that his friends advised him to quit his native country, and try his fortune, as a literary man, in the great metropolis.

The advice was in accordance with his own private predilections; for he was proud of being considered a literary man, and very ambitious of acquiring the reputation of a successful author.

He therefore resolved on repairing to London, and trusting for a subsistence to the produce of his pen.

He reached the metropolis in 1821, with twenty-five pounds in his pocket, which was all that remained of the proceeds of his mother's furniture, after discharging a variety of trifling debts which she owed, and providing himself with the needful supply of apparel.

Coming from a quiet, unpretending village, six hundred miles north of the metropolis, it may easily be imagined how much he was impressed with what he witnessed in London, as well as with the place itself. He was charmed with the novelty, and dazzled with the splendour, of what everywhere met his eye, as he passed along the great thoroughfares. Regent Street, however, possessed peculiar attractions to him. And here we may pause for a moment, though it will slightly interrupt the flow of the narrative, to make the observation, that not only no part of London, but nothing in Lon-

don, possesses the same permanent charm to a stranger as Regent Street. Buckingham Palace, the Parks, the British Museum, Westminster Abbey, the Houses of Parliament, St. Paul's, the Thames Tunnel, and a score of other places which it is unnecessary to name, may all rely upon receiving an early visit from him; but nobody ever hears of his expressing a wish to see any of them a second time. With Regent Street the case is different. The charm which it possessed in his eye when he first put his foot in it, continues in all its original brightness: it never loses its loveliness; its attractions do not diminish by familiarity. The splendour of its shops, the rich and never-ending variety of the objects contained in its windows; the crowds of well-dressed persons perpetually promenading its pavements; the dashing equipages, tenanted by the beauty and fashion of the land, which sweep past you in a stream of unbroken continuity;—these are among the things which render Regent

Street a place of perpetual interest and attraction to the stranger, and which, it might be added, prevent its becoming uninteresting or unattractive even to the eye of him who has been for years a resident in the metropolis.

The bustle of Cheapside and the other crowded streets in the city contrasted strongly, in Joseph's view, with the stillness and repose of the peaceful village which he had left. He wondered whether the streets could be always as crowded as when he was proceeding along them, or whether there might not be some particular cause for the moving masses of human beings which he beheld passing to and fro whenever he chanced to be out. He was scarcely less confounded at the multitudes of horses, omnibuses, coaches, and other vehicles, which he saw in every direction. The whole scene was beyond anything he had ever conceived. It surpassed all his ideas of the business and bustle of the metropolis. It was with difficulty he could persuade himself that it was not all a

dream. Could it be real? Did not his senses deceive him? And if not—if what he saw was an actual scene—if it was only an every-day sight, whence could the vast concourse come from? Where were they proceeding to? What were their modes of earning a subsistence? How could they pursue their respective avocations amidst so much bustle and confusion? These were questions which obtruded themselves on his mind; and the more he meditated on them, the more was he perplexed at the mysteries of metropolitan life.

These, however, were only evanescent feelings. The novelty of the scene gradually wore off. Joseph's eye became familiarized to everything he saw around him, and the bustle and business ceased to excite his wonder. Ere two months had elapsed, he could pass along Cheapside without indulging in a single feeling of surprise at the immense masses of men that are there continually moving in opposite currents. But, indeed, for the rough jostling which he

had every now and then to encounter in consequence of the crowd, he might have passed along without discovering that he had not the pavement to himself: so powerful are the effects of habit.

CHAPTER II.

Visits Cogers' Hall—Account of the origin, appearance, and nature of the place—A ludicrous incident.

EVERY day of the first fortnight was diligently improved by Joseph in visiting the principal places of resort for strangers. But he was not one that would be satisfied with seeing the ordinary sights; he wanted to witness human nature in the various phases it assumes in all great cities; but especially in such a place as the modern Babylon. He had been to both Houses of Parliament, but he had not yet visited a subordinate sort of senate, of which he had read in Scotland, wherein all the more prominent political questions of the day were nightly discussed, and where the speeches were said to be, in many instances, as able and eloquent as any which are delivered in either branch of the Legislature.

He did not remember the name of the place, but his description of the character of the proceedings, enabled an acquaintance at once to point out the debating assembly into which he was desirous of being introduced.

"Oh, it is the Cogers' Hall you mean," remarked his friend.

"That is the name of the place," observed Joseph. "In what part of London is it?"

"In the neighbourhood of St. Bride's Church."

"Let us go together," said Mr. Jenkins.

"I have no objection," returned the other.

"Shall we go to-night?"

"If you wish it; but this being Thursday, will not be a good night."

"Is, then, one night better than another?"

"Oh, yes, there is a very great difference."

"Which is the best night?"

"Saturday night. On that night the place is crowded. In fact Saturday night is always a field night in the Cogers' Hall."

“Suppose, then, we appoint Saturday night next.”

“Agreed.”

Joseph's friend kept his appointment, and to the Cogers' Hall they proceeded. But, before following them thither, let us pause for a little, and endeavour to give the reader some idea of the place.

Cogers' Hall can boast of a very respectable antiquity; perhaps there is no other place in the country appropriated to discussions of the same kind, that has existed for an equal period. The discussions now nightly carried on in Cogers' Hall, commenced in the year 1756. The circumstances in which they had their origin, beyond the fact of their being of a political character, are, we believe, unknown; at any rate, our researches into the matter have not been rewarded with results on which we can rely.

The name, Cogers' Hall, is said to have been derived from the word “cogitate;” the persons forming the Society calling themselves co-

gitators, or reflectors, on the political events of the day.

A number of individuals, who have afterwards risen to great distinction, have made their first appearance, as public speakers, in Cogers' Hall. Among these may be mentioned the name of the late Mr. Alderman Waithman, twice Lord Mayor of London, and for many years one of the Members for the city.

The room in which the Cogers meet is not large. It is not capable of containing more than from fifty to sixty persons, with any degree of comfort, though a much larger number often cram themselves into it.

The Cogers always muster most strongly on occasions of great political excitement. On such occasions, even on the evenings of the other days of the week, as well as on that of Saturday, the Hall is often crowded in every part. Every one is naturally anxious to express his opinions on the state of public affairs in all great political conjunctures. It is only at such seasons that

the inveterate political character of the Cogers is seen in its proper light. Nothing can exceed the earnestness of their manner in commenting on the conduct of public men, except in masticating their chops, steaks, Welsh rabbits, or any of the other good things which grace the ever amply-supplied larder of the landlord. In ordinary circumstances, a few of the fraternity rejoicing in the reputation of crack speakers, are allowed to monopolize the greater part of the oratory to themselves. Not so when there is great political excitement out of doors,—the phrase by which the Cogers, in imitation of both Houses of Parliament, usually designate the public; then all are speakers. It may be worthy of mention, that the first time we visited Cogers' Hall, which was in company with a Coger of considerable standing, was on the Wednesday evening after the opening of the Parliament of 1837. The public mind, it will be remembered, was then very much occupied with the declaration of Lord John Russell against the

vote by ballot, the extension of the suffrage, the shortening of the duration of Parliaments, and, indeed, against all farther progress in the road to additional reform. That was a circumstance which could not fail to call forth the Cogers from the retirement of private life. Accordingly there was a numerous attendance, all eager to denounce the conduct of the then Home Secretary; and yet, paradoxical as the position may appear, the very excess of the general—I may say, universal—anxiety which prevailed on this occasion in Cogers' Hall, to play the orator, almost entirely prevented anything worthy of the name of public speaking taking place. We may be asked, "How could this be?" We will answer the question in as few words as possible. Well, then, the truth was, that so eager were the Cogers to give vent to their Radicalism at so momentous a national crisis, that they endeavoured to speak by the dozen at a time. The only evil was, that the audience, not having individually a couple of dozen ears, so as

to lend two to each orator, could not hear a word of what was said. Sometimes, indeed, it seemed as if the speakers actually outnumbered the hearers. The Babelish character of the eloquence was such, that hardly any of the speakers themselves heard what they were saying. The evil, consequently, soon cured itself; and eventually, from having twelve or fourteen orators all at once endeavouring to engage the attention of the remaining Cogers, there were scarcely any speaking at all.

Here let us state a fact which is highly in praise of the Cogers. We have always observed that, however little respect they may show to one another, they invariably evince the most profound deference for "My Grand,"—the title bestowed on the gentleman who has the honour of presiding in the Hall. Even on the memorable occasion to which reference has been made, when, from the anxiety of all to speak, there seemed to be a general determination that none should be heard; even on that occasion,

the moment "My Grand" opened his mouth, there was a profound and universal silence in the Hall. He made some pointed observations on the conduct of Lord John Russell,—which observations were loudly cheered. These were divided into three speeches. The first was delivered standing, and was as long as the remaining two; both of which were uttered while he retained his sitting posture in the chair. It should also be stated that, while delivering himself of the two short orations, "My Grand" kept the pipe in his mouth, and continued, by some means or other, which are probably unknown to anybody but himself, to speak and smoke at the same time; and this part of his duty he performed as well as if the capability of doing it had been one of the ordinations of nature,—which everybody knows is not the fact. It was impossible to help admiring the regularity with which the president of the Cogers took advantage of the necessary pause in his oration, while the Hall was resounding with the plaudits

with which his eloquence was greeted, to emit the inconveniently large collections of smoke which had "taken place" in his mouth. It was as gratifying to us to witness the "smoke which so gracefully curled" above "My Grand's" head, in these pauses in his orations, as the cheers of the Cogers must have been to him. It is pleasant to hear him speak; but half the pleasure of hearing him would be lost, if his audience did not, at the same time, see him. He never comes to what he conceives a point, without accompanying the last word with a smile. He is one of the most pleasant chairmen that ever presided over the proceedings of any body of one's "fellow-subjects." He is full of good temper, and furnishes an impressive illustration in his own conduct of the rule he lays down for the guidance of others—namely, to use one of his own favourite phrases, of "bearing and forbearing." Shakspeare says of Falstaff, or of some other of his characters, that he was not only witty himself, but the cause of

wit in others. "My Grand" speaks repeatedly himself, and is the cause of oratory in his brother Cogers. When he is anxious for a discussion on any given point, he has only to commence it himself, or (as he calls it) give "a toast," to insure a regular succession of speakers. There can be no question that, but for him, there would not be half the oratory in Cogers' Hall which is heard in that interesting locality. The occupation of the members, were he unhappily absent, would chiefly consist in masticating Welsh rabbits, and swilling Boniface's bottled stout; which last article the Cogers, to a man, declared to be unrivalled. Those who were present on the occasion, will remember that on one evening in November, 1838, seeing an unwonted dulness in the Hall, and a manifest indisposition in the countenances of the Cogers to play the Demosthenes of the evening, "My Grand" started to his legs, and, after a few introductory observations, proposed, as the subject of discussion, "The

Reform of the Reform Bill." The announcement was received with thunders of applause: its effect, indeed, was electrical. Cogers started up to speak in such rapid succession, that you would have thought at one time they would "stretch to the crack of doom." Did we say succession? That is not the proper word. They started up in half-dozens, and a most interesting and animated discussion ensued. There is one indication which "My Grand" always gives of his intention to speak, about half-a-minute before he begins, which is, putting his pipe in the centre of his mouth, and then causing it to project in a straight line. Most people prefer putting their pipes in one side of their mouth, and then placing them in a slanting position. So does "My Grand" in ordinary circumstances; but let those who are curious in such matters only observe the motions of "My Grand" for one evening, and see whether he does not, before making a speech—no matter how often he may

speak in the course of the evening—invariably adjust his pipe in the particular way we have mentioned.

When it happens (which it seldom does) that neither “My Grand” nor his deputy enters the Hall in time to take the chair, any person present is eligible to the office of president for the evening, in the event of a motion for his being chosen to it, being made and carried. On such occasions, if a stranger be in the room, a hoax is played off at his expense, by his being elected president for the evening, and then made to pay a certain penalty for the honour. A short time ago, a Yorkshireman, remarkable for his money-getting and money-keeping propensities, who had heard a great deal about the Coggers, and was consequently anxious to see what sort of animals they were, determined, on the very first night of his arrival in town, to pay a visit to their Hall. He was accompanied by two friends—one of them, Mr. Huggins, as celebrated for his waggeries as for his literary

abilities, which are certainly very great. Seeing the chair empty on their entrance, and it being past the usual time of "My Grand's" arrival, the wag had scarcely taken his seat when he rose and said—"Gentlemen, seeing the chair unoccupied, I have infinite pleasure in rising to propose that we choose, as our president for the evening, my very worthy and esteemed friend, Mr. John Rogers, who sits on my right. He has never been here before; indeed, this is the first day he has ever put foot in the metropolis."

The object of Mr. Huggins in making the intimation, was at once understood, and all prepared forthwith for a cordial co-operation with him in the hoax about to be practised.

"Yes, gentlemen," continued Mr. Huggins, "my excellent friend has never been in London before; but, notwithstanding that, I know enough of his intellectual acquirements, combined with his business habits (which are of the first-rate order), to justify me in saying that he

will make an admirable chairman. (Loud cheers, amidst which Mr. Rogers, as he himself afterwards remarked, blushed "profoundly," and held down his head.) Without one word of farther preface, therefore, I propose that Mr. Rogers do take the chair."

"I second the motion with all my heart," said the other friend of Mr. Rogers.

The question was put, and carried amidst acclamations, which almost threatened to cause an explosion of the Hall.

The artist then took Mr. Rogers by the hand, and conducted him to the chair with an edifying observance of etiquette.

"Gentlemen," said Mr. Rogers, betaking himself to his legs, after he had graced the chair for a few seconds in a sitting posture—"gentlemen, I do assure you that this is a most unexpected, as it soertainly is a most undeserved, honour. When I coom to Lunnun this morning, I never dreamt of any such distinction being conferred upon me. I will, gen-

tlemen, remember, with the deepest gratitude, this night till the hour of my death. I thank you, from the bootoom of my heart, for the hoonour you have done me."

"Mr. Chairman," said Mr. Huggins, "you have great reason to be proud of the high and honourable position to which you have been elevated by the unanimous votes, and amidst the loudest acclamations, of this most respectable—indeed, I may say philosophical, assemblage."

Mr. Rogers made a low bow, put his hand to his breast, while his physiognomy, which was of very ample proportions, deeply coloured from ear to ear, and from the summit of his brow to the lower extremity of his chin.

"But, Mr. Chairman," continued Mr. Huggins, "something more than mere thanks is always expected, and indeed exacted, on such an occasion as this, before commencing the business of the evening. A small penalty is"——

Mr. Rogers started at the word penalty, and then looked marvellously grave.

“A small penalty is always imposed on any gentleman who has, for the first time, conferred upon him the distinguished honour which you have this evening received, amidst universal and deafening applause. That penalty is”——

Here John looked as if he would burst, from the intensity of his anxiety to learn what the nature and amount of the penalty were.

“That penalty, Mr. Chairman, is the placing of five guineas in the hands of the treasurer, for the purpose of getting your portrait taken to hang on the walls of this room.”

Mr. Rogers stood aghast. He was too confounded to utter a word.

“But,” resumed Mr. Huggins, with the greatest possible gravity—“but, Mr. Chairman, if, from delicacy or other considerations, you have any objection to your likeness being taken and affixed to these walls, you can escape that penalty by submitting to another, which,

considering that less than the usual number of members are present to-night, will prove much lighter than the one already mentioned."

Mr. Rogers began to breathe more freely.

"That penalty, Mr. Chairman, is, that the gentlemen now present have the privilege of ordering anything of the waiter they please, to the extent of a shilling each, at your expense. It is for yourself, Mr. Chairman, to make your choice."

"Moost (must) I pay either penalty?" groaned Mr. Rogers.

"Oh, certainly; it's indispensable," shouted all present, with one voice.

"Well, gentlemen, if I moost, I moost; but I'm so taken by surprise that I hardly know what to do."

"It is not my intention to dictate, Mr. Chairman; but, as it may be inconvenient for you, who are to be only a short time in town, to give the requisite number of sittings for your portrait, I think it would be the better way to

accept the latter alternative at once. And you may think yourself exceedingly fortunate that there is not a full attendance to-night; as, in that case, you would have had, instead of fifty shillings, to pay five pounds."

"If you take my advice, Mr. Chairman," said John's other friend, "you will decide in favour of the latter penalty at once; for see," he added, pointing to the wall, "out of the many hundreds who have been chosen as you have this night, and, consequently, incurred the penalty annexed to the high honour, only those three chose to have their portraits taken; all the others preferred the second alternative.

"Yes, and those three would have done the same, only they knew they had exceedingly handsome countenances, of which they were very vain. The portrait of any one not having a handsome face would look horrible, by contrast, if placed beside them."

This decided Mr. Rogers; he hesitated no

longer. He was the proprietor of one of the most ugly visages which anybody ever witnessed, and, what was more, was sensible of the fact. "Waiter!" he shouted most lustily, though the functionary wanted was within a few yards of him. "Waiter!"

"Coming, sir."

"How many gentlemen are there here?"

"Besides yourself, sir?"

"Besides myself."

"One, two, three, four, five, six, seven, eight, nine, ten—forty-nine, sir."

"Then bring them in a shilling's-worth of whatever they shall order."

"Yes, sir," responded William.

"Come, come, Mr. Chairman, you're forgetting yourself," interrupted Mr. Huggins.

"Oh, must I order something for myself also?"

"Why, certainly, there's no compulsion; but surely, Mr. Chairman, you would not sit and see us all enjoying ourselves at your expense, and not join us."

“Waiter!”

“Yes, sir.”

“Bring me a glass of brandy-and-water.”

Mr. Rogers paid his £2 10s., with a trifle to the waiter. The usual speechification was proceeded with ; but the expenditure of his money deprived him of all the pleasure which he would otherwise have derived from the distinction of being chairman. He vacated the chair at an early hour, resolved that he would never again cross the threshold of Cogers' Hall, and inwardly heaping maledictions on the heads of the friends who had “taken him in” in a double sense.

CHAPTER III.

Joseph, seeing the necessity, resolves to do something for his own support—Determines, with that view, on the publication of a poem entitled “The Universe”—Calls on the prince of publishers, to offer him the manuscript—Is disappointed in not obtaining an interview—Returns home, and sends the manuscript for the bibliopole’s inspection—The result.

BEFORE Joseph had been many weeks in the metropolis, he discovered that his limited funds were rapidly undergoing the process of diminution. Every stranger in London, who wishes to make any appearance in society, will, however careful he may be to avoid extravagance, soon make the same discovery; for he is liable to overcharge and imposition at every step he takes. Consequently, though living in London be expensive at all times and to all persons, it is peculiarly so to the man who is unacquainted with its ways. Our hero, finding his funds fast

disappearing, and feeling that he was thrown entirely on his own resources, began to think seriously of what he was to do. He had written a poem, when in his twentieth year, on a very comprehensive subject, and one, moreover, of universal and enduring interest: the subject was "The Universe," and that he proposed to be the title of the book. Hitherto, the poem had lain in undisturbed repose in his trunk: it had never been offered to any publisher; in fact, there was no publisher in the north of Scotland to whom it could be offered. The only individuals who had seen "The Universe," were a few private friends, and, as is always the case, they were rapturous in their admiration of it. They were unanimous in the opinion, that it was destined at once to raise the author to the highest distinction at which a literary man could aspire—to place him, indeed, on a level with Shakspeare and Milton; and to procure him that competence, if not fortune, which is the usual accompaniment of a

first-rate literary reputation. He therefore resolved on applying himself, in the first instance, to the disposal of his manuscript to a "respectable publisher;" not doubting that the name it would get him, immediately on its publication, would at once insure him a market for whatever else he might write, whether in poetry or prose.

Joseph therefore determined on calling personally, next morning, with his manuscript, on the prince of poetic publishers. Who that gentleman is, need not be more particularly indicated. He is known almost as extensively as any of the illustrious poets whose works he has brought out in every variety of form, in a style of surpassing typographical and pictorial elegance, and at so cheap a rate as would make the poets of a previous age hold up their hands in amazement, were they only permitted to revisit our sphere, and to gaze on these "illustrated editions" of the press of the present day. It is no stretch of the imagination to suppose,

that were the shades of Shakspeare, Pope, Thomson, and others—Milton, having been blind in his latter years, is necessarily out of the question—cognizant of the elegance with which modern works are brought out, they would wish that the period of their appearance in the world had been deferred until near the middle of the nineteenth century. But this is a digression.

Joseph, according to the resolution he had formed, called, the following morning, with the manuscript of "The Universe" in his pocket, on the Leviathan bibliopole. He found two cabriolets and a carriage at the door of his business premises, which, as every one knows, are situated in a fashionable street at the West End. He entered, and inquired whether Mr. Harold was at home.

"Your name, sir, if you please," said a gentlemanly-looking young man behind the counter.

"I only want a few words with him," remarked Mr. Jenkins.

“ Perhaps you would send up your card, sir,” suggested the other.

Joseph had no card to send up. In the north of Scotland, cards are not very common among young persons, not even among the younger branches of the better orders of society; and he was not aware, that in London a card is almost as indispensable to a person with any pretensions to respectability, as a coat or hat.

“ My name,” said Joseph, ingeniously avoiding the subject of the card, “ is Mr. Jenkins.”

“ Tell Mr. Harold that Mr. Jenkins wishes to see him,” said the party behind the counter, to another young man in an inner room.

The latter vanished for a few seconds, and then re-appeared. “ Mr. Harold, sir, is sorry that he is so much engaged at present, as to be unable to see you.”

“ Shall I call again?” inquired Mr. Jenkins.

“ Perhaps you would be kind enough to mention the nature of your business. Would any one else than Mr. Harold do?”

“ I should like to see Mr. Harold himself: it is about a matter of great importance to him, as well as to me.”

“ He is very sorry, sir; but he is particularly engaged at present.”

“ Could you mention any other hour at which I should be likely to see him?”

“ It is quite impossible to say; the claims on his time are so many and urgent.”

“ I wish to make him the *first* offer of a poem.”

“ A poem, and by *a* Mr. Jenkins! a name unknown to poetic or any other kind of fame!”

Both the individuals in the employ of Mr. Harold felt instantaneously relieved.

“ Hadn't you better *write* to Mr. Harold on the subject?” suggested the elder of the two.

“ That would be your best course,” remarked the other.

“ Very good; well, I shall write to him. Good morning, gentlemen.”

“ Good morning, sir.”

Joseph returned home with his manuscript. The polite conduct of the young men prevented his seeing anything unpromising in the interview with them; while nothing unfavourable could be inferred as regarded Mr. Harold himself, he being not only so pressingly engaged as to be inaccessible at the time, but ignorant of the great poetic prize which Joseph meant to place within his reach. Had he only known that it was Mr. Jenkins, the author of "The Universe," who was desirous of seeing him, and that the purport of his presence in his bibliopolic premises, was to offer him "The Universe," the parties to whom the cabriolets and the carriage at the door belonged, who were enjoying the privilege of an interview, would have received a polite hint to make way for him.

Joseph, the moment he returned to his rooms, eagerly snatched up pen and paper, and despatched a note to Mr. Harold. He apprized him of his having called that morning upon

him at Periodical Street, but found him too deeply engaged to be accessible. He added, that the object of his visit was, to offer him the manuscript of "The Universe," a poem which would extend to 300 pages, and would sell for half-a-guinea without illustrations, but for which a guinea might, with propriety, be charged, if liberally and tastefully illustrated. He now begged to send the manuscript for his inspection, and would be glad to hear from him in the course of a few days, stating what he would be disposed to give for it.

On the third day, Joseph received a note from Mr. Harold, along with his manuscript, thanking him for the offer of his poem of "The Universe," but regretting that it was not in his power to avail himself of it.

Joseph was confounded at this. Not in his power to avail himself of it! Why, what was to prevent him, if he felt so inclined? It could only be the want of will, not the want of power, that prevented his acceptance of the

offer. And that a man should be indisposed to avail himself of such an opportunity as might never again present itself, was, indeed, passing strange. "There must be some mistake in the matter; indeed there must," reasoned Joseph. "Ah!" said he, suddenly dropping his hand on his head after a few moments' abstraction—"ah! I see how it is; he has not read the manuscript; he has too hastily inferred that it is of the same common-place character as most of the poetry of the day. He must be undeceived; indeed he must."

And, in prompt execution of his newly-formed purpose, Mr. Jenkins sent "The Universe" on a second visit to Mr. Harold, accompanied with a note to the effect, that he was certain he had returned the manuscript without reading it, and begging that he would bestow upon it an attentive perusal.

In less than an hour from its quitting Mr. Jenkins' lodgings, "The Universe" was returned to him, with a note from Mr. Harold,

positively declining the publication of the work ; and adding that, though the whole of the poem had not been read, *enough* of it had been perused to justify the resolution not to undertake its publication.

The rejected manuscript arrived, on this occasion, at a most unseasonable moment ; for, just as the energetic knock of the messenger who brought it was heard at the door, the author was in deep debate in his own mind as to whether he ought to accept £500 for it ; assuming that Mr. Harold would be so deficient in liberality as to offer so moderate a sum.

It will not, therefore, surprise the reader to be told, that he felt considerably mortified at the result of his second application to the prince of publishers. He had no doubt of speedily meeting with some more discerning bibliopole, who would feel but too happy in bringing out a work which would not only prove the source of ample profit to him, but

raise his reputation as a publisher. Still he could not divest his mind of the unpleasantness arising from the reflection, that the work would not possess the advantages and the *eclât* of being ushered into the world under the auspices of him who had brought out the works of two of the greatest poets of the age.

CHAPTER IV.

Though disappointed with the result of his first effort to dispose of his poem, Joseph renews the attempt with another eminent publisher—Waits on, and is admitted to an interview with, the latter—His mode of dealing with authors—The nature and result of the interview.

WHILE the fruitless attempt which we have just recorded was being made to induce Mr. Harold to purchase the manuscript of “The Universe,” the finances of the author, as will be easily supposed, were becoming lower and lower every day. As a question of pounds, shillings, and pence, and wholly without reference to the reputation he so confidently expected to obtain for it, it now became a point of urgent importance that Mr. Jenkins should lose no time in procuring a purchaser. He therefore resolved to renew the effort without delay. Accordingly, on the following day, he

called on Mr. Fiction, another publisher of celebrity, to submit his manuscript to him. Mr. Fiction's plan of doing business differed materially from that pursued by Mr. Harold. Proud of his aristocratic connexions, the latter made it a rule not to see any person who was not himself the possessor of a title, or who came without an introduction from some aristocratic acquaintance. Mere merit was nothing in his eyes. Even a second Shakspeare, coming to him without the recommendation of some nobleman, or person of family, would not succeed in his efforts to obtain an interview with him; while the man that could boast of some illustrious prefix to his name—such as “The Marquis of,” “Lord,” or even “Sir”—was sure, however humble his intellectual pretensions, to be received with the most obsequious politeness. Mr. Fiction, on the other hand, though no man was more respectful to persons of rank—and the feeling is a very proper one—conceived it possible that

there might be merit in a book, though no noble blood ran in the author's veins. In support of this hypothesis, he was in the habit of musing over, in his own mind, the names of many of the greatest men that the world ever produced—all of whom had no distinctions of birth or rank to boast of.

His plan, therefore, was, to grant personal interviews to all who called upon him, lest some of them—and, possibly, the least likely in appearance—might have some "happy idea" to suggest, or promising proposal to make. But, in order that there should be no undue expenditure of time with literary men, from whom, after hearing their propositions, he saw no reason to expect "anything to his advantage," he had given standing orders to one of his clerks to enter the apartment precisely five minutes after the interview had commenced, and to say, "A gentleman wants to see you, sir." If the work which the other party had to propose for publication did not appear to Mr. Fiction a promis-

ing speculation, he desired his clerk to usher the imaginary gentleman "into an adjoining room," adding, "I'll be with him this moment;" and then rising, and turning to the author, he would make a low bow, and express a hope that he would excuse him. Of course there was no alternative for the poor literary man, but to walk himself out of the room, Mr. Fiction politely accompanying him to the door. If, on the other hand, the bibliopole liked the "idea"—for that is the technical word when an author has any promising work to propose for publication—the clerk was desired, when he rushed into the room, announcing that "a gentleman" wished to see Mr. Fiction, to "tell the gentleman" that he was very much engaged just now.

Should this chapter meet the eye of any inexperienced author, who may happen to make proposals to Mr. Fiction for the publication of a work, and hear him give the above instructions to the clerk, instead of desiring him to "put the gentleman into the other room;" let him

take courage, and try to make for himself the best terms he can.

Joseph presented himself on the morning formerly mentioned, outside the counter of Mr. Fiction's bibliopolic premises. His name was intimated in the usual way; and the party making the intimation immediately returned, and desired him to walk up to Mr. Fiction's room. He was ushered into the presence of the enterprising bibliopole, and politely asked to take a chair.

"Good morning, sir."

"Good morning, Mr. Fiction."

"You have come, I presume"——

"I have come to propose to you the publication of a work"——

"A work of fiction, in three vols." interposed the spirited bibliopole.

"No, sir, a work of a very different description," said Mr. Jenkins, with a slight dash of self-importance in his manner, as if he considered a work of fiction to be unworthy his genius.

"Oh, I beg your pardon," remarked Mr. Fiction, apologetically; "a work of travels, perhaps."

"No, sir; certainly not, Mr. Fiction. It is a work on a theme of universal and enduring interest, and not referring to any particular country or time."

"A *theme*," ejaculated Mr. Fiction to himself. "A theme! That is a word which very few of *my* authors ever use. 'Plots,' 'stories,' 'incidents,' 'heroes,' 'heroines,' 'denouements,' and so forth, are quite familiar to my ears; but 'theme' does sound somewhat strange. Pray, Mr. Jenkins, what may your work be?"

"'The Universe, sir.'"

Mr. Fiction was confounded. "I don't exactly understand you, Mr. Jenkins."

"Oh, I flatter myself, sir, there is nothing unintelligible in what I have said," replied Joseph, with a forced self-complacent smile.

"Oh, I simply mean that I do not know

whether 'The Universe' be the subject or the title of your proposed work."

"It is both, sir," said Mr. Jenkins, emphatically.

"Oh! And how many volumes do you propose making it?"

"Only one."

"Only one! We are not fond of publishing works in only one volume; we always prefer three; because the expense of advertising three volumes is no greater than the expense of advertising one. Could you not, at any rate, spin it out to two volumes, supposing that, on examination, I approve of the work?"

"Oh, dear no, sir; I could not do that. Spin it out! Why, to add a single line to it would completely spoil it."

"It is a work of light or miscellaneous literature, is it not?" inquired Mr. Fiction, half dubiously.

"Certainly not, sir," replied Mr. Jenkins, mouthing the words in a particular manner, and

looking as if he deemed the question an improper reflection on the constitution of his mind, and the purpose to which he had applied his talents.

“Not a work of fiction ; nor a book of travels ; nor consisting of light or miscellaneous literature ! Pray, then, Mr. Jenkins, will you be good enough to inform me what is the nature of your proposed work ?”

“It is a poem, sir ; the volume will consist of one great poem, sir,” replied Mr. Jenkins, emphatically, and with a dash of self-consequence in his manner.

Mr. Fiction looked aghast. Had Mr. Jenkins been a burglar, and been in the act of plundering his apartments at the time, he could scarcely have looked more astonished than he did on the occasion.

“We never publish *any* poetry,” said the bibliopole, after he had slightly recovered his breath.

“But this work, Mr. Fiction, is not a poem

of an ordinary class; neither, I flatter myself, is the subject treated in an ordinary manner. The manuscript has been seen by a number of competent judges, and they, one and all, declare that they never saw anything that could"—

Joseph was interrupted in the delivery of his sentence by the abrupt self-introduction of the clerk, with the usual announcement, "A gentleman wishes to see you, sir."

"Show him into another room; I'll be with him presently," said Mr. Fiction.

And, as he spoke, he rose from his seat; which, of course, Mr. Jenkins understood to be a signal for him to do the same.

"Then, Mr. Fiction," observed Mr. Jenkins, slowly taking up his hat, "you do not think it advisable to undertake the publication of 'The Universe.'"

"We never publish *any* poetry."

"Then, good morning, Mr. Fiction."

"Good morning, Mr. Jenkins."

CHAPTER V.

Makes a third attempt to get a purchaser for his manuscript—
Fails as before—Resolves to publish the work on his own
account—Some secrets worth knowing respecting authorship
and publishing—Extent of the sale of “The Universe.”

THIS looked ominous; and, sanguine as was Mr. Jenkins' temperament, he began to have serious apprehensions that, after all, he should not succeed in procuring a publisher for “The Universe.” Not that he thought one iota the less of the production, but that there was now a probability of his failing to persuade a publisher that its merits were as great as he and his Scottish admirers conceived they were. Still, possessing, as he did, no inconsiderable share of that quality—the quality of perseverance—for which his countrymen get so much credit, he resolved not to relinquish the attempt to find a publisher for a work, which, he felt assured, would not only prove pecuniarily profitable both

to the publisher and to himself, but procure him a name in the literary world, which would induce the bibliopoles of the metropolis to pour in their solicitations to him to honour them with the publication of his future works. Besides, the daily decreasing condition of his funds rendered it necessary that he should lose no time in getting his book brought out. He therefore, on the following day, called on a third publisher, in the hope that he should be more successful with him than he had been with either of the former two. An interview was asked for, and promptly obtained. Mr. Jenkins stated the purport of his visit. The bibliopole smiled. "Ah, sir, I perceive you're not much acquainted with the literary world yet. You'll soon see the folly of writing poetry."

"I don't understand what you mean, sir," observed Mr. Jenkins, pettishly.

"Then you soon will, depend on it. You'll excuse me, sir, but I'm very much engaged this morning."

Of course this was a hint, which there was no mistaking, that our hero's presence could be dispensed with, and he accordingly quitted the place.

The unfeeling manner in which the bibliopole spoke to Joseph, made a painful impression on his mind. And no wonder; for, to a young man just entering on metropolitan life, and wholly unacquainted with the ways of the world, it was a piece of gratuitous harshness. He might not only have civilly declined the publication of the work, but he might, by a slight alteration of the words and the tone of their utterance, have converted his heartless sneer into a piece of sound advice. Publishers, however, are proverbial—though, happily, there are many honourable exceptions—for their disregard of an author's, and especially a young author's, feelings. Having, as a class, no very lively susceptibilities themselves, they are unable to sympathise with those who have. But it is not my purpose to enter on the un-

pleasant treatment which authors too often receive at the hands of their publishers. Those who would like to see some striking specimens of such treatment, ought to consult D'Israeli's "Curiosities of Literature."

Mr. Jenkins, though still on equally good terms with himself as a poet and as a man of general talent, and not thinking a whit less favourably of his poem on "The Universe," now began to feel something approaching to despair. Still, the necessity of doing something with the poem—that is, as he fancied, getting something for the manuscript—not only continued as pressing as before, but became more and more urgent every hour. While deliberating that night, as he lay restless on his bed, and when, with a less anxious mind, he would have been sound asleep, as to what he should do on the following day, it occurred to him, that he had heard of authors publishing their works on their own account. He was delighted with the thought. He had no doubt

of the success of the book: it could not fail to be admired wherever read, and, if admired, to command a remunerating sale; while there was this most grateful reflection, that it would no longer be in the power of publishers to insult him. He therefore called on a printer, and received an estimate of the expenses of paper and printing for 1000 copies; the volume to consist of thirteen sheets, post octavo, which, as each sheet consists of twenty-four pages, would make 312 pages. The estimate given by the printer was, sixty-five pounds for cash, or seventy pounds with credit. Ready money Mr. Jenkins could not, of course, give; and the question therefore was, how could he obtain credit for a few months? The friend, introduced in the second chapter, who accompanied him to Cogers' Hall, eventually undertook, though disapproving of the plan of publishing on his own account, to become security for him. This arrangement being completed, and the work having been put to press, Mr. Jenkins

called, one morning, on Mr. Figure, a publisher in the city. "Mr. Figure, I believe," said Mr. Jenkins, on entering the shop of the former.

"Figure is my name," remarked the bibliopole.

"My name is Jenkins. I have come to propose a work of mine for publication."

Mr. Figure remained silent for a few seconds, looked at the counter, and then inquired, "What is the nature of the work, sir?"

"A poem, entitled 'The Universe.'"

"Oh, sir," said the bibliopole, with a significant shake of the head, and transferring a book, which was lying on the counter, to one of his shelves, "Oh, sir, I should no more think of publishing a poem than of attempting to fly. Money thrown in the streets, sir—money thrown in the streets. Though Byron himself were to rise from the dead, and come and offer me the manuscript of a new 'Childe Harold, I would not accept it as a present; it would fall still-born from the press. There is no such thing now as a"—

“But this,” interposed Mr. Jenkins, “is a poem of a very peculiar character.”

“No matter; it is all the same. *Any* poem would drop still-born from the press. There is no taste for poetry now-a-days. No publisher, depend upon it, will undertake its publication.”

“But I did not mean that it should be published at *your* expense,” said Mr. Jenkins.

“Oh! ah! I see—you mean to publish it on commission;” and Mr. Figure’s countenance brightened as he spoke.

“I do, sir.”

“You simply wish me to publish it on your account.”

“Precisely so.”

“Of course I can have no objection to that; and, what is more, I will do my best to push it.”

“What is the amount of commission in such cases?” inquired Mr. Jenkins.

“Ten per cent; that is the invariable rule of the trade, sir.”

“And you account to the author for all sales at trade price, after deducting ten per cent.”

“Just so, sir.”

“But you quite dishearten me, Mr. Figure, by telling me that *no* poem can now-a-days succeed.”

“Well, perhaps I spoke too rashly and without due limitations, on that point. More strictly speaking I ought, possibly, to have said, that poetry in *general* does not now succeed.”

“So that you think there is, at least, a *chance* of my work succeeding.”

“Oh, certainly, there is a chance.”

“Well, I’m glad you say so.”

“When, Mr. Jenkins, will the work be ready?”

“In about a fortnight.”

“I hope you have chosen a happy title.”

“Every one assures me that the title is undeniably good.”

“Pray what may it be?”

“‘The Universe.’”

“Oh! excellent! admirable! Nothing could be better,” exclaimed the bibliopole, now cheering on the luckless wight of a poet, and having an eye to the profits which would be derived from the advertisements, and the service it would be to himself, by keeping his name before the public, even should not a single copy be sold.

“Of course you’ll advertise it well,” continued Mr. Figure.

“Oh, certainly,” replied Mr. Jenkins, “I’ll do everything I can that way to bring it fairly into notice. What is the best mode of managing that part of the matter?”

“Why, sir, by my expending in advertisements any amount of money you think proper to leave in my hands for the purpose.”

“How much will be necessary?”

“Oh, that depends on the circumstances and disposition of the author. It would require, at least, twenty pounds to do the work anything like justice.”

“Why,” remarked Mr. Jenkins, “that is more than I can conveniently spare. At any rate, in the first instance, suppose we say half the sum?”

“Very well, I will lay it out judiciously, as far as the amount will go.”

“Then I will call with the money in two or three days, and you can begin advertising immediately.”

“Very good,” said Mr. Figure; and Mr. Jenkins wished him a good morning.

The ten pounds were handed to Mr. Figure, and a succession of advertisements appeared in the leading daily and weekly papers. The work itself followed in due course. By this time the resources of Mr. Jenkins had completely dried up; and knowing that, however successful the work might be, some weeks, at least, would elapse before he could expect any return from his publisher, he bethought himself of applying to a friend in Scotland for the loan of ten pounds for a few weeks. His application was success-

ful; the money was immediately remitted to him; and he resolved, as he expressed it, to "rest on his oars" for a season, to watch the progress, which, in his view, was but another name for the triumph, of his work. "The Universe" was extensively reviewed. The opinions of the critics were as diversified as it was possible for opinions to be. Some of them, in the plenitude of their admiration of the poem, gravely asserted that it was superior to "Paradise Lost," or to anything which ever proceeded from Milton's pen. Others, less lofty in their eulogiums, said it was only second to the work just named; while some six or seven reviewers maintained that it was a farrago of nonsense; that it was neither poetry nor prose; that, indeed, there was not another man in the king's dominions (we had not then the happiness of living under a queenly government) who could have written anything so supremely and unredeemably absurd. There was not an intermediate opinion between these opposite judg-

ments, but was expressed by one or other of the critics with whom the metropolis abounds.

Regarding it as the more dignified course not to make any inquiries at the publisher's as to what reception, in the way of sale, his poem was meeting with, until after it had been some time before the public, Joseph resolved not to call on the former until the expiration of the six weeks, the term for which he had obtained the loan of the ten pounds. Even then he would have made no inquiries as to the sale of "The Universe," had it not been that he prided himself on his punctuality, and on his faithful fulfilment of any promise he had made. He felt that his countryman in Scotland, who had generously advanced him the ten pounds, at a time of great emergency, had the best right to expect a moiety of the first profits of the work. In six weeks he accordingly called on Mr. Figure to inquire how matters stood; having, by this time, fully decided, in his own mind, as to the best way of disposing of the proceeds of the sale,

after he should have remitted his friend's ten pounds. Mr. Figure was all civility to Mr. Jenkins. "And how is 'The Universe' doing?" inquired the poet. "It has been extensively reviewed, and in several journals in most gratifying terms," he added.

"I'll show you presently," answered Mr. Figure, advancing to his desk, and snatching up his ledger.

"Oh, don't trouble yourself to refer to your book; I only want a rough guess," said Mr. Jenkins.

"Why, it will, perhaps, be more satisfactory to see the exact position of matters," pursued the bibliopole.

"It is wholly unnecessary," said the poet; "it will be quite sufficient if you just name the amount of the proceeds."

"Oh, you had better see the exact position of affairs. Here, sir," placing the book before Mr. Jenkins—"here, sir, is the precise state of matters."

Mr. Jenkins eagerly glanced his eye at the folio to which the bibliopole directed his attention, and read as follows:—

Francis Figure,

Dr. to Mr. Joseph Jenkins.

To three copies of "The Universe" (trade price 7s. 2d.)	£ 1 1 6
To commission (10 per cent.)	0 2 1 $\frac{3}{4}$
		<hr/>
Amount due to Mr. Jenkins		0 19 4 $\frac{1}{4}$

The blood rushed to Mr. Jenkins' face; his eyes were seized with partial blindness; a sudden dizziness overtook him, and it was with difficulty he could retain his equilibrium. When he had slightly recovered his self-possession, he said, "Mr. Figure."

"Sir."

"Surely there must be some mistake here."

"No mistake, Mr. Jenkins."

"You don't mean to say that these are all the copies of 'The Universe' you have sold."

"I do, sir."

"It's impossible."

"It's true," remarked Mr. Figure, with imperturbable coolness.

Mr. Jenkins inwardly groaned.

"Shall I pay you the nineteen and fourpence farthing just now?" said Mr. Figure.

"Mr. Figure, do you mean to insult me, sir?" answered Mr. Jenkins, with considerable indignation.

"Not at all; by no means; only a business question, sir," remarked the bibliopole, with the most perfect nonchalance.

"We can settle at some other time. You don't mean to say, Mr. Figure, that three copies are all that *will* sell?" observed the poet.

"That is a point on which it is impossible to give an opinion," said the publisher.

"Do works ever sell after they have been some time published, and proved a failure?"

"Oh, yes," answered Mr. Figure; "Milton's 'Paradise Lost,' you know, is a case in point."

Mr. Jenkins groaned an assent to the accuracy of the statement.

"What can be the cause of so decided a failure?" pursued the poet.

"Oh, it is very obvious."

"Pray what may it be?" said Mr. Jenkins, eagerly.

"Why, sir, simply this—that your poem is *too* good: you are a century in advance of the age."

Mr. Jenkins drew his hand across his chin, and delivered himself of a "Hem!" He felt that this was praise, certainly; but, then, what was praise without pudding? He could not live on his publisher's praise.

"Your poem, sir," resumed the bibliopole, "will be admired by posterity; it will call forth unqualified"——

"But, Mr. Figure," interrupted Mr. Jenkins, never questioning the soundness of the bibliopole's judgment, nor doubting the truth of his predictions—"but, Mr. Figure, what am I to do in the meantime? I cannot subsist on the admiration of posterity; I cannot live on prospective praise; I must have"——

"Is Mr. Figure within?" inquired a stranger, who had entered the shop, before Mr. Jenkins had completed his sentence.

"My name is Figure," answered the bibliopole.

"I have called for the purpose of consulting you about the publication of a volume of poems."

"Mr. Jenkins, would you do me the favour to call upon me any time to-morrow?" said the bibliopole, addressing himself to the author of "The Universe." The latter, perceiving at once that this was a hint to withdraw, and leave Mr. Figure to victimize another "poet," responded to the appeal, by saying he would call again, and immediately walked himself out of the bibliopole's shop.

CHAP. VI.

Mr. Jenkins determines for ever to abjure writing poetry, and never again to publish on his own account—Wishes to become a parliamentary reporter.

THE result of our hero's literary speculation, was a determination never to indite another line of poetry; and never again, in the event of his becoming the author of any prose production, to be his own publisher.

He farther determined that he would not, for some considerable time, again turn his thoughts to authorship of any kind. The little taste he had already had of that, was sufficient to inspire him with a distaste for it, at least for a season. He saw, judging from the experience he had had, abundant reason to believe, that authorship on his own account, was as likely an expedient as any he could have recourse to, for getting into debt; but he could not perceive the

most slender probability of its providing him with the means of living.

With his little resources not only completely exhausted, but having, by his literary adventure, got himself considerably into debt, it became a matter of urgent and absolute necessity, that he should turn his attention to some occupation which would afford him the means of obtaining a certain livelihood, however humble it might be. The only question was, how or where could he meet with such an occupation? As for himself, he was quite bewildered on the subject. He knew not in what direction to turn; he was utterly at a loss as to what sort of employment he ought to apply himself. He eventually resolved on applying to a Mr. Lovegood (with whom he had accidentally met, from whom he had received much kindness, and of whose friendship even to strangers he had heard a great deal) for his counsel in the matter. He was unwilling to apply to that gentleman, knowing he had no claims on him; still he was the only individual

in all this vast metropolis, from whom he conceived there was a chance of obtaining assistance, or even friendly advice. Mr. Lovegood was not only remarkable for his kindness of heart, but was, moreover, himself a literary man—the author of various successful works—which made Joseph calculate still more confidently on his sympathy and friendly counsel. Nor was this all: Mr. Lovegood was also a *Christian*, in the most comprehensive acceptation of the term. He not only constantly sought to perform right actions, but to perform those actions from proper motives. His was the religion of the thought, as well as the word—of the heart, as well as the life. The good he did was not the result of any desire to obtain the applause of men, but was purely the consequence of a conviction that, in doing all he could to benefit his fellow-creatures, he was discharging an obligation imperatively imposed upon him by the Divine command. The inward consciousness that he was doing the will, and, conse-

quently, receiving the approbation, of his Creator, was all the reward he ever sought to obtain for the performance of acts of kindness and benevolence. The judgment of the world was, in no instance, the rule of his conduct. The tribunal by whose decisions he was always guided, was one which had been set up in his own breast,—the tribunal of conscience, enlightened and regulated in all its decisions by the revealed will of the Almighty. To his Maker he felt that he was placed under a solemn and abiding responsibility for everything he did, however trivial his actions might often appear in the eyes of others; and he found, as every one else will find who recognises and makes a conscience of adopting the same principles of action, that this was the surest way to avoid unpleasant circumstances, and to insure his own peace of mind. If men could only be persuaded of the infinite anxiety which one spares himself, by acting according to the rigid rules of right, the most profligate of mankind would become

conscientiously upright in all their transactions with their fellow-men from a feeling of pure selfishness.

Mr. Jenkins was received by Mr. Lovegood with the greatest cordiality. He apologised for the liberty he had taken in calling to ask a favour from one on whose friendship he had no claims; but was told that no apology was needed. Mr. Jenkins then mentioned the position in which he was placed by the unfortunate result of his literary adventure; and Mr. Lovegood, so far from rebuking him for his folly, inquired whether he could name any other way in which he could act the part of a friend to him.

Mr. Jenkins suggested that, if he could procure an engagement on any of the daily papers, either as reporter or stated contributor, he thought he might yet be able to make his way in the world.

“An engagement as stated contributor to a daily journal is,” remarked Mr. Lovegood, “very

rarely to be met with. The situation of a reporter might, probably, with a great deal of exertion and influence, be procured; but it is a most arduous and harassing situation."

"I am well aware of that," replied Joseph, "but I would willingly submit to any amount of labour, and encounter any measure of fatigue, to be put in the way of earning a livelihood for myself."

"Do you think," inquired Mr. Lovegood, "you are competent for the situation of a parliamentary reporter? I do not mean in a literary sense, but in reference to the requisite facility of catching and transferring to paper the words which fall from a speaker's lips."

"I am aware," answered Joseph, "that great mechanical dexterity, as well as superior literary taste, is necessary to constitute an efficient reporter; but I think that, if I possess the latter qualification, I shall not be found wanting in the former."

"The situation of a reporter to a daily

paper," observed Mr. Lovegood, "is one of great respectability, though gentlemen of the press do not rank so high in public estimation here as in France. It is one, moreover, which furnishes, perhaps, better opportunities for obtaining an insight into the manifold mysteries of metropolitan life, than any other that could be named. But that very circumstance only renders it the more perilous in a moral point of view. You have to meet with all sorts of persons, and mix in all descriptions of society; and, unless one's mind be well fortified with right principles, he is in great danger of being damaged by the contact."

Mr. Jenkins remarked, in an unassuming tone, that he trusted his mind and conduct were under the government of moral principles.

"Moral principles," remarked Mr. Lovegood, "are very good in themselves; but they do not constitute a sufficient protection to any one, especially a young man, when surrounded by powerful temptations to stray from virtue's

paths. Thousands of young men yearly bring with them to London irreproachable moral characters, who, in the short space of ten or twelve months, become so thoroughly contaminated by the corrupt practices of those with whom they associate, as to cease even to do outward homage to virtue, and to glory in the very things which, before they launched on the ocean of London life, they could not have contemplated without horror. Unless that divine grace which is brought to light by the Gospel, reign in the heart, and restrain and regulate the life, there can be no security even for one's moral rectitude, amidst the formidable temptations with which the metropolis abounds."

To this Joseph made no reply. He knew nothing, experimentally, of the heaven-born principles of which the other spoke. He was a moral man, but nothing more.

"I am intimately acquainted," resumed Mr. Lovegood, "with the editor of one of the morning papers. I will speak to him about

you; and I have no doubt that, should there be now or soon afterwards, a vacancy on the establishment with which he is connected, he will be happy to give you an opportunity of testing your competency for the situation."

Mr. Jenkins heartily thanked him for the many striking proofs he had afforded of his friendship, and took his leave.

CHAPTER VII.

Is received on trial for the situation named in the previous chapter—Feelings consequent on a first attempt at parliamentary reporting—Succeeds in getting a permanent engagement.

MR. LOVEGOOD's application to the editor of the morning journal to which he had alluded, was successful. There fortunately happened to be a vacancy in the reporting department of the establishment at the very time he spoke to the editor on the subject; and the result was that, in ten days afterwards, Mr. Jenkins was to obtain a regular engagement, at five guineas per week, as parliamentary reporter, assuming that, after that period, he should be found competent for the office. The result of the trial was, to satisfy the editor that he was fully competent to discharge the duties of the

situation in an efficient manner. Intimation was made to him to that effect, accompanied with the gratifying observation that he might consider his engagement of a permanent character.

Those only who have been put on their trial in the gallery assigned in the House of Commons to the reporters for the daily press, can form the slightest notion of the arduous nature of such a trial. Only imagine a young man—and reporters when commencing their career, are, almost without an exception, young in years—entering a place in which he never was before, if, indeed, he ever were in the House of Commons at all; entering it, too, for the special purpose of noting down, in order that it may be forthwith transferred into a morning paper, every word which shall fall from the lips of those who shall address the House. Let it be farther remembered, that he enters this strange place—a place well calculated to overawe and flurry the mind of any person unaccustomed to the scene—

with the painful consciousness resting on his mind, that on the way in which he acquits himself depends the alternative of his being either ingloriously rejected, or permanently engaged. Let all this be distinctly and deeply borne in mind, and then say whether there be room for any surprise, that the reporters' gallery of the House of Commons should be entered for the first, or second, or third time, with fear and trembling. Many a young man, of great talents and distinguished scholastic attainments, has entered that perilous place and completely failed, from the overpowering sense he entertained of the difficulties of his undertaking, coupled with the knowledge that his destinies for life might very possibly be hanging on the issue of his adventure. The most intellectual persons, especially where, with a highly cultivated mind, there is associated—which is frequently the case—an extreme sensitiveness, are the very persons who run the greatest risk of breaking down. The annals of the gallery are replete with

exemplifications of this. Some, indeed, of the most illustrious names in modern literature might be mentioned, as affording illustrations of it in their own persons.

Mr. Jenkins, however (as has been already remarked), came triumphantly through the fiery ordeal, and received the reward of a regular engagement.

CHAPTER VIII.

Duties of a parliamentary reporter—Joseph attends the meetings of a political association—Character of the leading speakers—Amusing incident—Close of the public career of the principal demagogues.

A PARLIAMENTARY reporter, when not employed in the gallery of either House of Parliament, is liable to be sent to public meetings, to public exhibitions, to the theatres, and to various other places where the proceedings of public bodies are to be reported, or criticisms to be given on works of art. In this way “the gentlemen of the press”—as reporters are usually called—are afforded peculiar facilities for forming an acquaintance with eminent men, and for obtaining an early and intimate knowledge of what is going on in the mighty Babel.

Mr. Jenkins, in the discharge of his professional duties, had occasion to attend most of the leading political meetings held in London. At

some of those meetings, he was in the habit of witnessing very amusing scenes. One, which was held monthly in the north of London, was particularly prolific of ludicrous incidents and of rich exhibitions of human character. This monthly meeting was held for the purpose of carrying out the schemes of a body of persons calling themselves the "Association of North London Liberals." These political meetings were always very numerously attended. Taking their own word for it, the persons who played the part of orators at these meetings, were all patriots of the first order. They cared not for themselves at all: their solitudes and anxieties—so unselfish was their patriotism—were wholly reserved for their country. Its sufferings they wept over; for its degradation by a tyrannical Government, they deeply blushed; and they were willing any day, should the necessity ever arise, to submit to martyrdom for their principles. Energetically and often did one and all of these self-elected redressers of their country's wrongs,

declare their willingness to die, rather than compromise their principles in the slightest degree, or forego one particle of their indefeasible and inalienable rights. The majority of the usual speakers at these meetings, were a set of desperate men, severally affording, in their own persons, one more illustration, in addition to the countless number previously given, of the truth of Dr. Johnson's remark, that "every scoundrel takes refuge in patriotism." There was one exception to the justice of the remark. Mr. Frederick Freeman, in becoming one of the regular speakers at the monthly meeting of the North London Liberal Association, was actuated by no more unworthy motive than that of seeking an opportunity of displaying his fancied oratorical powers.

Of his talents as a public speaker he was exceedingly vain. He considered himself the Demosthenes of the nineteenth century; and cherished the comfortable conviction that, had Fortune been sufficiently considerate towards

him to give him a seat in either branch of the Legislature, he would have immeasurably outshone the most distinguished of our Lords and Commons. It was, no doubt, very unkind of Fortune not to raise him to the distinction of a legislator, and he never forgave her ladyship, not even in his dying hour. As Mr. Freeman was thus denied the opportunity of shining in what he himself always called his proper sphere, he was compelled, unless he chose to hide his light altogether, to shine in whatever sphere was accessible to him. He preferred the North London Liberal Association to any other arena which was open to him at the time; and accordingly gave its members, and the mixed multitudes that used to attend its monthly meetings, the exclusive privilege of listening to his eloquence.

Frederick invariably wrote his speeches at full length, and then committed them, verbatim, to memory. On one occasion, when the public mind was worked up to a pitch of extraordi-

nary political excitement, and when the general meeting, appointed to take place in two days afterwards, was consequently expected to be unusually numerous, the committee met to make the necessary preliminary arrangements. Frederick gave sundry hints, too broad and too often repeated to be mistaken, that he was prepared to make an oratorical display which would excite no little sensation among the audience, and which would surpass any exhibition he had ever before made. He was accordingly solicited by the committee to address the meeting. He expressed a wish to have the moving of one of the most important of the resolutions to be proposed for its adoption. He was asked to make his choice: he chose the third resolution. Mr. Murphy, a clever Irishman and a wag, who was also to take part in the proceedings of the day, observed a roll of manuscript peeping out of Frederick's pocket. It at once occurred to him, that this was the crack speech with which

Frederick intended to electrify the meeting. Mr. Murphy abstracted the manuscript from Frederick's pocket with a care and dexterity which would have done no discredit to the most experienced pickpocket in the metropolis. It was precisely as he supposed. "He held in his hands"—to use a parliamentary phrase—Mr. Freeman's speech, written in a style of penmanship, as far as regarded legibility, which would have added to the reputation of the most renowned copying clerk in London. What was more—all the more important passages, those which Frederick thought were most likely to tell, and consequently to draw forth plaudits from the audience, were marked on the margin with a score, and the word "emphatic;" meaning that they were to be delivered with peculiar emphasis. Mr. Murphy instantly bethought himself of having a joke at Frederick's expense. He resolved to commit the whole of his speech to memory, not neglecting to obey the instructions given on the margin, as to the passages

which were to be delivered with the greatest emphasis. Mr. Freeman having previously got every word of his speech by heart, and having a memory so retentive that it never failed him, had no occasion to refer to his written oration during the interval between the preliminary meeting of the committee and the great meeting itself; and, consequently, never missed his manuscript. His only feeling was one of impatience for the arrival of the hour at which he was to astonish the huge mass of his fellow-men who, there could be no doubt, would be present at the meeting. If it had been in his power, he would have annihilated the intervening period of time. That, however, he felt was not to be done—not even by so great an orator as himself. But, though Time would not quicken his steps to please Frederick, he proceeded at his accustomed pace; and, accordingly, the great, the important hour of taking the chair, at length arrived. It had been arranged, at the particular request of Mr. Murphy himself

(though for what reason he was so particular on that point, no one but himself had any idea), that he should be intrusted with the seconding of the second resolution.

Mr. Onward, who had taken the chair amidst deafening acclamations, opened the meeting in a decidedly democratic speech, every sentence of which—and sometimes before the sentences were half finished—was lauded to the echo. He concluded, by calling on Mr. Headlong to move the first resolution, which that gentleman did in a manner which did not belie his name. The resolution was appropriately and energetically seconded by a Mr. Leveller, and unanimously passed amidst plaudits, which, when at their height, were calculated to produce a stupifying effect. Then came the moving of the second resolution, which was also of a thoroughly democratic, or rather destructive character. With the spirit and tendency of this resolution the speech of the mover was in admirable keeping. Never did a resolution and the remarks with

which it was introduced, more thoroughly accord together. Then came Mr. Murphy's turn. "Mr. Murphy, *gentlemen*" (the most worthless and ragged mob that ever congregated for the purpose of doing all in their power to annihilate the most valuable institutions in the country, and to throw society into a state of perfect chaos, are all, while listening to demagogues, undeniable *gentlemen*)—"Mr. Murphy, gentlemen," said the Chairman, "will second the resolution." Mr. Murphy accordingly rose and advanced to the front of the platform, amidst loud cheers. "Now, then," said Mr. Freeman to himself, with infinite self-complacency—"now, then, it will be my turn next. I hope the fellow (Mr. Murphy) will be short-winded, and not detain the meeting." "Gentlemen," commenced Mr. Murphy, "I rise, with great diffidence, to second the resolution. I exceedingly regret that the duty should not have devolved on some gentleman more competent than myself for its due discharge. I am sorry that

my very able and excellent friend, Mr. Freeman, does not now stand in the place which I occupy. He would, I am sure, have done ample justice to it; pouring, in strains of unrivalled eloquence, a flood of light on every aspect which the great principle involved in the resolution can be made to assume."

Here Mr. Freeman looked blushing on the floor of the platform, while the spacious room rang with the plaudits with which the sentiment was received.

"My only consolation, gentlemen, is—and I am sure you will receive the announcement with ecstatic delight—my only consolation is, that my worthy friend, Mr. Freeman, is to move the next resolution. (Loud cheers.) I will not, therefore, deprive you of the pleasure of listening to his spirit-stirring and truly patriotic oratory, by detaining you at any length."

To the latter clause of the sentence Mr. Freeman inwardly uttered an "Amen."

"Mr. Chairman, and Gentlemen, it was justly

remarked by the celebrated Lord Chatham—one of the few noblemen who have conferred a lustre on the order to which he belonged—it was, I say, once remarked by that distinguished man, that there are times and seasons when a nation are called on, by the most sacred considerations, to present a bold and determined front to the aggressions of tyranny.”

Loud cheers followed this sentence, in the midst of which Mr. Freeman was observed to look somewhat surprised, as he directed his eye towards the speaker. It struck him as a very extraordinary circumstance, that Mr. Murphy should have commenced his speech in the very words in which he intended beginning his; but then he remarked, that great minds do sometimes exhibit a wonderful coincidence in their trains of thought, and, consequently, he resolved to think no more about it.

“ Gentlemen, *this* is one of those times, *this* is one of those seasons.”

Deafening applause greeted the sentiment;

during which Mr. Freeman several times moved his chair, gazed with evident astonishment at the speaker, and, indeed, exhibited every conceivable sign of surprise and uneasiness.

“ Yes, gentlemen, the country has now arrived at a most terrible crisis; and it is the bounden duty of every Englishman, of every man who has the slightest particle of patriotism in his breast—of every man who has a spirit within him, to abhor and to spurn at slavery—of every man who values freedom, and *would be free* : it is, I say—and would that my voice could reach the ears of the tyrants who seek to enslave us, who would fain grind us beneath the iron hoof of oppression—it is the duty of every *Englishman* ; it is the duty of every one that now hears me ; it is, gentlemen, *your* duty, to arise in all the majesty of men—in all the lofty dignity of those in whose bosoms the flame of a pure and ardent patriotism burns and blazes with an unquenchable energy, to resist the daring encroachments of despotism.”

Here the immense assemblage simultaneously rose from their seats, took off their hats, and gave expression to their feelings in plaudits which were literally deafening, and which lasted for some minutes. Mr. Freeman now put his hand into his pocket, and, for the first time, missed his manuscript. Unable any longer to restrain himself, he rose, and vociferously exclaimed, "Stop the speaker. Gentlemen, that is *my* speech."

"Gentlemen," resumed Mr. Murphy, "the time is gone by for mincing matters. The people of this great country must now trust to themselves. (Loud cheers.) If the torrent of tyranny is to be stemmed; if a bulwark is to be erected against the farther progress of despotism, Englishmen must" ——

Mr. Freeman, now worked up to a pitch of ungovernable excitement, again rose, and a second time protested, in the most vehement manner, that Mr. Murphy was delivering his speech. He was met with loud cries of "Turn him

out;" "Chuck the fellow over the platform;" "Order, order," &c.; when some one who sat beside him, seized him by the tails of the coat, and forcibly reseated him in his chair. Order being eventually restored, Mr. Murphy resumed.

"I was proceeding to observe, gentlemen, when so unaccountably interrupted by my friend, Mr. Freeman, that if the despotism which is evidently destined for us by the tyrants in power, is to be averted at all, Englishmen must throw all their minor differences to the winds of heaven; and, forming themselves into one cordial and compact confederacy, promptly afford our oppressors a specimen of what a united and determined people can do, when attempts are making to rob them of their rights, and to despoil them of all that makes life worth possessing."

Here there was another burst of tremendous applause, in the midst of which Mr. Freeman started from his seat, and, springing like a tiger at Mr. Murphy, seized him by the breast of the

coat. He was torn from the speaker by a person on the platform, amidst the universal uproar of the meeting. "Why don't you turn him out at once?" shouted one. "He's mad," exclaimed another. "Send him to a lunatic asylum," cried a third. Order being once more partially restored, Mr. Murphy resumed.

"I appeal to you, Mr. Chairman, for protection against these unseemly interruptions. The conduct of Mr. Freeman is most extraordinary. If he will only have patience, it will be his turn next to address the meeting; and I pledge myself that I will offer *him* no interruption."

"No, because you have stolen my speech. Your conduct is most" —

The completion of the sentence was prevented by one of the demagogues on the platform suddenly and unceremoniously clapping his hand on Mr. Freeman's mouth.

"I will not, gentlemen, detain you long. I was seeking to impress on your minds, the paramount importance of union, energy, and im-

mediate action. It has been remarked by one of the most illustrious philosophers which this or any other country, which this or any other age of the world, ever produced, that a people resolved to maintain their freedom, never can be made slaves. Gentlemen, *are you resolved to maintain your freedom?*”

Vociferous shouts of “We are! we are!” accompanied with deafening cheers, proceeded from all parts of the meeting. Mr. Freeman, however, instead of joining in the universal response to his own patriotic sentiment, audibly groaned.

“Gentlemen, I anticipated that answer. I know that there beats not a bosom before me that is not ready to peril his all—that is not prepared to risk his liberty; ay, and even his life itself, in the boundlessness of his zeal for his country.”

Here another shout of tremendous applause burst from all parts of the meeting. While its tones were resounding through the place, Mr.

Freeman, who by this time had been worked up into a paroxysm of passion, which made him look like an infuriated maniac, started from his seat, and was again about to spring at the speaker, but was prevented by those beside him, who, seizing him by the arms, once more dragged him back to his seat, in which he was kept by sheer force, during the delivery of the remainder of the speech. Mr. Murphy having resumed his seat amidst applause which seemed, for a time, as if it would never end—the resolution was put and carried unanimously, amidst the loudest applause.

“Gentlemen,” said the chairman, “Mr. Freeman will move the next resolution.”

“I’ll do nothing of the kind,” observed the latter, suddenly starting to his feet, and eagerly snatching up his hat; “I’ll do nothing of the kind. After the injustice done me to-day, I’ll never move another resolution, nor make another speech in my life.” And so saying, he immediately left the place, to the surprise of

all present, with the single exception of Mr. Murphy.

Mr. Freeman kept his word; and happy was it for him that he did so. Formerly, when in the habit of spouting democracy, and often something worse at the meetings of the North London Liberal Association, he neglected his business, and was known by all his friends, if not by himself, to be rapidly running to ruin. His fortune began to retrieve as soon as he broke off his connexion with the violent men composing the committee of that Association; and he eventually became a man of the highest respectability in his sphere of life. Very differently did the career of his democratic companions terminate. Mr. Onward soon afterwards was obliged to seek an asylum on the Continent, to escape the consequences of certain swindling transactions of the most aggravated character, in which he was deeply implicated. Mr. Headlong was doomed to undergo a long period of imprisonment for grossly assaulting his wife; while

Mr. Murphy, then only in his thirty-fifth year, was sent across the seas, at the public expense, for forging, to a large amount, the name of a friend to whom he was under the deepest obligations for previous services.—There was another leading demagogue (a Mr. Bullet) in the Association, of whom no notice has been taken, but to the close of whose political career, some slight reference ought to be made. With his deep moral criminality, there was mingled a dash of the romantic. Mr. Bullet had long, to use the fashionable phraseology of the day, had a young woman under his protection. She was the sister of Mr. Dogget, a brother demagogue, and had been seduced by him on one of those occasions on which he and her brother were engaged, at the house of the latter, concocting their revolutionary schemes. It so happened that, a few months before the breaking up of the Association, a new patriot of the first water, of the name of Braggs, gave in his adhesion to it. As he went the whole length in liberalism, and was

a very effective declaimer, he rose at once to the rank of a leading man among the orators; and he and Mr. Bullet became, in less than a fortnight, inseparable friends. Braggs was a married man, and the father of four children. He surpassed the whole of the declaiming fraternity to which he belonged, in the frequency and seeming earnestness of his advocacy of private morality. He dealt out his invectives, with "liberal" hand, on all those who, professing to be the denouncers of public abuses and legislative corruption, could yet indulge, in private, in practices which were severely condemned by those principles of morality which have existed in all nations and ages of the world, and found an abode in every well-regulated breast. One evening he surpassed himself in the vehemence and eloquence with which he enforced his virtuous views. Next morning he abandoned his wife and family, and decamped with the mistress of his friend and fellow-patriot, Mr. Bullet. The latter gentleman, in the plenitude of his sym-

pathy for Mrs. Braggs, went, on the evening of the same day, to condole with that lady, and, at the same time, to express his virtuous indignation at the faithlessness of him on whom he had lavished so much kindness.

A fellow-feeling, every one knows, makes us wondrous kind; and nothing, it is an equally well-ascertained fact, has a more powerful influence in drawing out people's affections to each other, than a similarity of sufferings or circumstances. Bullet denounced Braggs in terms of unlimited indignation; and Mrs. Braggs, though no advocate for any gentleman forming an illegitimate intimacy with one of her sex, could not refrain from saying, that the lady who had quitted Mr. Bullet's protection, had acted a very ungrateful and improper part. Mr. Bullet was so pleased with Mrs. Braggs' views on this point, and was, at the same time, so anxious to continue to give "the ill-used woman" all the consolation which his sympathy could afford her, that he re-

peated his visits at intervals much shorter than those of angels' visits to the earth. So much did the two enter into each other's feelings, and so strongly did they sympathize in each other's wrongs, that, in ten days after the elopement of the first pair, they followed their example, leaving Mrs. Braggs' four children to the tender mercies of the parish. By and by, however, Mr. Braggs' means became exhausted, and, with their disappearance, came a return of Miss Dogget's fond affection for Bullet. She wrote to him from Manchester, expressing her deep regret at the steps she had taken, and throwing the whole blame on "the brute (Braggs) who had taken advantage of her simplicity." She implored Bullet's forgiveness, though she could never forgive herself; assuring him that her heart was broken at her folly, and that her eyes had been in a complete ocean ever since she had quitted his (Mr. Bullet's) roof. Bullet at once forgave her, and entreated her to return to his heart and his

arms, both being equally open to receive her. She was in his embraces within forty hours of the receipt of his note; and, in as many hours thereafter, Mrs. Braggs was turned into the streets, to live if she could, or to die if she could not. "Sophy (Sophia was her name), Sophy, will you ever leave me again?" said Bullet, looking the lady, with an aspect of tenderness, in her face.

"Never, never—oh, never!" was the energetic response of Miss Dogget, throwing her arms, as she spoke, around Bullet's neck.

"You're sure."

"Oh! do not doubt me. I only wish you would allow me to prove the truth of my assertion, and the firmness of my resolution, by making me your lawful wife."

"I did intend doing that before your elopement with that wretched fellow Braggs," remarked Mr. Bullet.

"Oh! how I wish you had! that unfortunate occurrence would not, in that case, have taken

place, and I should have been spared the misery I have since felt, and now feel."

And Miss Dogget, as she spoke, very dramatically again entwined her arms around Bullet's neck, and thrust her head into his bosom—bathing his waistcoat with her tears, and filling his ears with her sobbing and her sighs. The effect was altogether irresistible. "Sophy," said Bullet, raising her face from his bosom, and looking touchingly at her; "Sophy, you shall be my lawful wife; all I have"—and Bullet was the proprietor of £150 in bank notes, which were lying in his desk, to say nothing of some valuable articles of furniture—"all I have shall be yours."

"Oh! James," sobbed Miss Dogget—James being Bullet's Christian name—"oh! James," and she again gracefully dropped her head on his breast.

The latter kept his word. In less than a fortnight Miss Dogget was lawfully and truly Mrs. Bullet.

A fortnight more passed, and Mr. Bullet had occasion to go, for two days, into the country. He begged "Sophy" to accompany him. It would have been a heaven on earth for her to have done so; but, the moment he had made the proposal, she was seized with "a serious illness," and expressed a wish to retire to her bed.

"My dear Sophy," said Mr. Bullet, in great alarm, "I'll postpone going from home, seeing you are so ill."

"Oh, no, love, don't do that; you're going on business, and business, you know, must be attended to. A day's rest will bring me round again."

"But I cannot think of leaving you in your present state."

"There is no danger, James; it's only a temporary illness. You don't start till to-morrow at ten, and perhaps a night's rest may restore me."

The night passed away, Mrs. Bullet enjoying seven consecutive hours' profound repose. She

professed herself considerably better, but was, of course, too feeble to accompany him on a distant journey.

"Well, my dear," said Mr. Bullet, "there is no help for it; I must, however reluctantly, go by myself. I trust you will be perfectly recovered by the time I return."

"I'm quite sure I shall," returned Mrs. Bullet, in affectionate accents.

The hour for starting arrived; and Mr. Bullet, after being affectionately embraced by his wife, quitted home in pursuance of his journey.

"Punctual as a lover to the moment sworn," he returned at the time he had promised. He knocked at the door, and, knowing that his wife could always distinguish his knock from that of anybody else, he confidently calculated on her opening the door and welcoming him herself, as it was the first time he had been absent since their marriage. His servant, however, let him in. "How is your mistress?" inquired he eagerly, fearing that, as she was not

to be seen as he entered the house, she must have had a relapse.

“Don’t know, sir,” answered the servant, in a feeble and faltering tone.

“Don’t know! What do you mean?”

“Missus is not in, sir.”

“Not in at this hour of the morning!”

It was only seven o’clock.

“No, sir.”

“And pray, how long has she been out?” inquired Mr. Bullet, in great consternation.

“She’s been gone these two days, sir.”

Mr. Bullet was scarcely able to support himself. His countenance assumed the paleness of death, and a few seconds elapsed before he was able to utter a word.

“Do you know where she is gone to?” was his next question.

“No, sir, I don’t.”

“Did she say when she intended to return?”

“No, sir, she did not.”

"Was there anybody with her when she left?"

"Yes, sir," replied the maid, hesitatingly.

"A man or woman?"

"A man, sir."

"A man! And do you know who he was?"

"It was Mr. Braggs, sir."

Mr. Bullet groaned aloud, and, staggering with difficulty to the sofa in the parlour, sank down in a state of stupefaction.

As soon as he had recovered sufficiently to be able to speak, Mary mentioned to him that "missus" had left a letter for him in her bedroom.

"Bring it down."

It was brought down and read. It intimated that Mrs. Bullet had eloped with Mr. Braggs. The writer farther said, that her object in wishing to be married to Mr. Bullet was, that she might have a legal right to plunder him; and that, availing herself of that right, she had taken with her the £150, and all the portable

articles of any value in the house. She concluded by protesting that she never had the slightest regard for Mr. Bullet, but was devotedly attached to Mr. Braggs, with whom she would live and die.

CHAPTER IX.

Importance of a proper religious education—Joseph's want of it—Consequences of neglecting the outward means of religion—Conversation with Mr. Lovegood on the subject.

No man can have lived any time in London, without being struck with the number of young men who, though what is called religiously educated, and commendably correct in their moral conduct, lose every sense of religious obligation before they have been many months in the metropolis. Their course of retrogression begins by their absenting themselves from a place of worship, and neglecting all the external observances of religion. When once they have proceeded thus far, their downward progress is rapid and inevitable. They rarely stop until they have plunged themselves over head and ears in the mire of moral degradation.

There is no disguising the fact, that such is the history of great numbers who have been carefully instructed, by pious parents, in the distinctive doctrines of the Christian faith. It will, however, be found in the vast majority of such cases, that the parties have not, in early life, been thoroughly grounded in evangelical truth. Their parents have contented themselves with teaching them by mere rote—perfectly satisfied if they could repeat, from memory, the answers given in catechisms and other works for the religious education of the young. There is a radical defect here. Unless an anxious desire be felt, and a constant endeavour made, to impress divine truth on the heart, there is no ground for hoping that the learner will be materially benefitted by it. When he launches on the ocean of life, and has to come into daily contact with men of loose notions on religious subjects, and whose sole rule of action is the readiest and easiest way to gratify the unhallowed propensities of their nature;

he will feel that he has nothing to oppose to the antagonist force with which he comes into collision.

It was the misfortune of Joseph Jenkins, that his religious education—if, indeed, such education deserve the name of religious—was of the nature to which we have just referred. In Scotland, he had been regular in his attendance in his parish church; he was an amiable and interesting youth; he possessed several excellent qualities; his moral conduct, indeed, was unexceptionable. He was, moreover, in a merely notional or theoretical point of view, intimately conversant with the details of the Christian scheme. His religion, however, was confined to the head; it never, in the remotest degree, affected his heart.

The result was, in his case, what it has been in the case of unnumbered individuals before him. For a season, after coming to London, he was exemplary in his attendance in a place of worship in connexion with the Presbyterian

establishment of his native land. There was, too, an external propriety in his moral conduct which it was pleasing to witness. As, however, he began to form acquaintances in London, and to feel that he was in a fair way of making a competent livelihood, his attendance in a place of worship became less regular. He began by deeming it enough to go to chapel once a week. In less than a month he thought there would be no harm in occasionally absenting himself from it the whole day, provided he felt indisposed to leave his room, or was invited to join some party of pleasure. In a few weeks more he came to the conclusion, that going to a place of worship at all, or making any distinction between Sunday and any other day, were very unnecessary things. His practice kept pace with his newly-adopted notions. He would not, it is true, commit the crime of theft; but he saw no other objection to getting into debt, which he knew he had no reasonable prospect of ever being able to pay, than the in-

convenience of being dunned, and probably being some day consigned to the care of the Marshalsea of the Queen's Bench prison. The progress he made in libertinism, was of the most marked description. He himself was the only person of all who knew him, who was not struck with it; it excited the surprise even of persons who had themselves been confirmed libertines for a long series of years. Every moment he could spare from professional duties was devoted to the indulgence of his passion for criminal pleasure; and that passion only grew in strength the more it was fed. The more he conceded to it, the greater became its demands. The first portion of his unemployed evenings was spent in the tavern or the theatre; the remainder in houses of a still more objectionable kind.

If a thought of a Supreme Being or a future state, did occasionally obtain an entrance into his mind, not a moment did he lose, after the discovery had been made, in seeking to eject the

unwelcome intruder. As yet, he was no speculative infidel. He nominally assented to the truths of Christianity; hence the circumstance of his being so eager to banish all reflections respecting the being of a God, and the destinies of a world to come. To a person living in guilt and yet unconfirmed in speculative infidelity, there can be nothing so terrible as the thought of the Most High, or of a future state. Joseph knew this from painful experience, limited though the period yet was of his libertine career.

Mr. Lovegood had learned, with the deepest regret, the line of conduct Joseph was pursuing. The latter had not called on him ever since he had fairly abandoned himself to a course of indulgence in immoral pleasures. It is one of the almost invariable concomitants of guilt, that it leads its victims studiously to shun all intercourse with the virtuous persons with whom they were formerly acquainted. Mr. Lovegood had, on learning how he was conducting himself, repeatedly invited Mr. Jenkins to his house;

but the latter, under some pretext or other, always declined the invitation. Feeling, as he did, a peculiar interest in the well-being of Joseph, and seeing no probability of his being able to prevail upon him to call at his house, Mr. Lovegood determined on paying him a morning visit, for the purpose of remonstrating with him on the criminality and inevitable consequences, if persisted in, of his conduct. He found Joseph in bed—as, indeed, he would have done, if, instead of calling at eleven in the morning, he had deferred his visit till two o'clock; for the result of the late hours he now kept, and the habits of indolence he had contracted, was, that he rarely quitted his bed before that hour. Mr. Lovegood's presence, caused considerable embarrassment to our hero, who would have given anything to avoid the interview. He, however, received his friend and visitor with the respect which his moral worth could not fail to extort from all who knew him, even from the most abandoned of mankind; and with, besides, a

sense of the deep obligations under which he lay to him. The latter, after a few introductory observations of that general kind which are usually made on one acquaintance meeting with another, stated plainly, but mildly, the purpose of his visit. He expressed the deep concern with which he had heard of Joseph's regularly absenting himself from a place of worship, utterly neglecting even the external observances of religion; and resigning himself, without restraint, to the impulses of those criminal propensities which are inherent in human nature, though not equally powerful in all. He reasoned and remonstrated with him, not only on the moral criminality of the course he was pursuing, but on its certain effects, if persisted in, even as regarded his status in society and the means of his subsistence. He pointed out to him, that the loss of moral character would, sooner or later, be infallibly followed, not only by the loss of his situation, but probably his utter ruin, even in a worldly point of view. Mr. Jenkins listened,

with the greatest attention, to all that his benefactor said. He felt that every word he uttered was true; in his own bosom it all met with a ready response. He urged a variety of excuses for himself, ascribing his errors (as he called them) to the circumstance of his being professionally obliged to associate with young men who led him astray. He expressed a grateful sense of the friendship which prompted Mr. Lovegood to point out his "errors," and gave him a solemn assurance, that he would be more careful, for the time to come, as to whom he associated with, and how he acted.

CHAPTER X.

Becomes an infidel—Causes of infidelity—Wretchedness of an infidel creed—General remarks.

HITHERTO, Mr. Jenkins might be regarded as a speculative believer in revealed truth, though in his practice trampling on all its most sacred obligations. If any one had expressed or insinuated a doubt of his Christianity, he would have resented it as an unpardonable insult—an unjustifiable reflection on his character. Nay, he would have gone even farther than this; he would have entered the lists (and on repeated occasions did enter the lists) as a champion for the Christian faith when its truths were assailed in his presence. Nor, in this respect, was he a singular character. Christendom is crowded with such persons. That the parties themselves do not discern the glaring inconsistency of their

conduct is only one of the innumerable proofs that are daily furnished, of the moral blindness which sin has produced in the minds of men.

Eventually, however, a conviction began to break in on the mind of Mr. Jenkins that, if Christianity were true, the course of conduct which he had latterly pursued, was not such as to warrant a belief, that his would be a happy hereafter. On the contrary, he looked forward to a future state with apprehension and alarm. The result was precisely what might be expected: he began to wish that there were no future state at all.

No one can have bestowed any consideration on the operations of his mind, without being cognizant of the fact that, when a man anxiously wishes that any particular position in morals were true, he almost invariably, sooner or later, reasons himself into the conviction that it is true. In all such cases his mind is sealed against the admission of adverse evidence, while its portals are thrown wide open to whatever

arguments can be brought forward in its favour. So it was in the instance of Joseph. He studiously abstained from the perusal of any work which had for its object to prove the authenticity of the Scriptures, and the consequent truth of Christianity; while he eagerly sought for, and carefully read, whatever books had been written in favour of infidelity. With his mind thus filled with the leading objections which have, at various times, been urged against Christianity, while wholly unacquainted with the triumphant answers which have been given to one and all of these objections, it will not occasion surprise when the reader is informed, that the wishes of Joseph were eventually converted into convictions. He became a speculative, as he had before been a practical, rejector of Christianity. There were seasons, it is true, in which the unwelcome suspicion and terrible apprehension, that the Scriptures might after all contain a divine revelation, would obtrude themselves on his mind. His hours of soli-

tude, and particularly of temporary sickness, were especially seasons of this nature. The visit, however, of a worldly acquaintance, or the occupation of his mind with literary or secular matters, usually had the effect of ridding him of such unwelcome reflections, and of causing him to relapse into his infidel notions.

Infidelity is a miserable system: no man ever yet found happiness in it. A happy unbeliever is a contradiction. Desolate, indeed, is the soul of him who rejects the revelation which the great Creator has vouchsafed to his creature man. None but an infidel can form any idea of the wretchedness which reigns in an infidel bosom. Not only have all who have been delivered from the dreadful domination of unbelief, been forward to bear their testimony to the misery of which it is the parent; but those, also, who have renounced Christianity, and embraced an infidel creed, have, even while the victims and slaves of atheism or deism—for there is, in effect, scarcely any difference between the

two—been forced to make the admission, that misery and unbelief are inseparably associated together. The experience of Joseph afforded a striking illustration of this. Though never a Christian in the evangelical or legitimate acceptation of the term, he was (as before remarked) a speculative believer in revelation; in other words, was a Christian in his own estimation. And, while he continued so; while he was in the habit of attending externally to religious observances, he enjoyed a certain kind and amount of happiness, though falling far short of that kind and that amount of bliss which invariably accompanies the work of regeneration. How different the state of matters now! His infidel notions not only afforded him no consolation, but plunged him into unspeakable wretchedness. He talked of Christianity as a delusion, but he admitted it was a most delightful delusion. He talked of infidelity as a reality, but he confessed, because he felt, that it was a wretched reality. Nor was

this all. Though the prevailing impression on his mind was, that Christianity was false, the idea (as has just been observed) would, every now and then, force itself upon him, that there was, at least, a possibility that it might be true ; and if so, where should he be ?

In this respect, I am persuaded that Mr. Jenkins was only undergoing a mental process which every infidel is more or less frequently doomed to go through. I feel assured that the man never existed, provided he were acquainted with revelation, whose mind had become so steeled with infidelity, as to be impervious to even an occasional apprehension that, after all, Christianity might be a divine system. Infidels, I know, may, in the spirit of bravado, affirm that they have lived for years in the entire and constant disbelief of Christianity. I confess I cannot believe them. I should like to hear their testimony on the point, when they are stretched on their dying-beds, and are conscious that they stand on the verge of the world to come. No

instance, that I am aware of, is on record, of a dying infidel having, in his last moments, gloried in the fact that he was then dying, as he had always lived, in the full conviction that Christianity was a system of fraud and falsehood.

At all events, Mr. Jenkins could make no such boast. He was often assailed by the apprehension that, after all, Christianity might be a revelation from Heaven. To describe the alarm with which the apprehension filled his mind; to convey an idea of the wretchedness it produced in his breast, were wholly impossible. Those, only, whose minds have been similarly exercised, can form any adequate conception of it. The horror which, on such occasions, took possession of his soul, did not exhibit itself in the same way as the horror of which Bolingbroke was the victim, when he could not endure to be one moment in a dark room by himself; but it made him spend many a sleepless hour, and caused him, whenever practicable, to shun that solitude which is not only essential to the spiri-

tual health of the mind, but in which every true believer finds his highest happiness. To be shut up in a room by himself, without books or writing materials, or any other means of occupying his mind or amusing himself, would have been, to Mr. Jenkins, a most terrible doom. His own thoughts, in his moments of sober reflection, he felt constrained to regard as his greatest enemies. Most earnestly would he have then wished that he were a believer in Christianity, were it not that revealed religion annexes the most fearful penalties to the course of conduct which he still continued to pursue.

CHAPTER XI.

Joseph extends his acquaintance with authors and publishers—

A dinner scene—Unpleasant discoveries on the following day.

As it was generally known among the literary men of the metropolis, that the majority of the reviews of new books which appeared in the daily journal with which Joseph was connected, proceeded from his pen, authors and publishers became desirous of forming a personal acquaintance with him; knowing that a little attention from them was not likely to render his notices of their works less favourable. With one author, Mr. Norman (who was also a partner in a publishing establishment), Joseph's intimacy ripened into friendship. Mr. Norman was a person quite to his taste. He was a man

of cultivated mind, pleasing manners, free-thinking opinions, and by no means encumbered with very rigid notions of morality. He kept a splendid establishment; far more splendid, indeed, than his means warranted. That, however, was nothing to him. If he could only obtain the needful credit, or, as he himself expressed it, could but "keep the top a-spinning," he cared not to what extent his creditors might suffer. He was self-willed in his conduct, and fancied, that to assume an independent bearing was to make himself a man of importance. He was in the habit of giving expensive dinners, to which Joseph was almost invariably invited. One day, about five years after the accession of George the Fourth, Mr. Norman determined to give an unusually large and splendid dinner. Being a bachelor, no ladies were present. The party included some of the most celebrated authors of the day, two or three publishers, and an officer of superior rank and high standing in the army. The cloth having been re-

moved, a gentleman who sat on the right of Mr. Norman, proposed, as the first toast, the health of the King.

"Oh, —— the King!" exclaimed Mr. Norman; "give us something else."

"Order! order!" shouted several voices at once. A hum of suppressed disapprobation was heard at all parts of the table; while Captain Royston, not knowing, in the confusion of the moment, whom the gentleman was who had uttered the offensive exclamation, cried, in stentorian accents, "Turn him out!"

"What!" exclaimed Norman, almost choking with rage; "what! turn me out of my own house! Who is the fellow who says he'll turn me out?"

"I am the fellow," answered the captain, springing to his feet.

"Sir, say that again, and I'll knock your head to atoms." And, as he spoke, and without waiting to see whether the captain would repeat the words, he snatched a large crystal bottle full of wine, and was in the act of aiming it at the other

—who sat some yards distant from him—when a Mr. Sherwin, who was next to him, seized his arm, and, with inimitable coolness, while all the rest of the company were worked up to a state of great excitement, said, “Don’t you think, Mr. Norman, we had better empty the bottle before you throw it?”

“Very well,” responded Mr. Norman, mechanically, as if scarcely conscious of what he was saying.

“Don’t you think, Mr. Norman,” pursued Mr. Sherwin, after an interval of a few seconds, “that you had better not throw it at all?”

“Very well,” replied the other, in the same mechanical way as before.

“Don’t you think, Mr. Norman, you had better sit down?”

Mr. Norman sat down.

“I’m quite sure it has been a mistake all through,” resumed Mr. Sherwin; “Mr. Norman meant no disrespect to our beloved King.”

“Certainly not,” said Mr. Norman.

“It was a mere thoughtless ejaculation, uttered in the forgetfulness of the moment.”

Mr. Norman nodded assent.

“And I am quite sure,” addressing himself to Captain Royston, “the gallant officer does not seriously mean to turn our excellent host out of his own house. It was merely a threat uttered on the impulse of the instant, and in the commendable exuberance of his loyalty.”

“Hear, hear,” cried a dozen voices at once; but that of the captain was not heard among the number.

“I am perfectly sure, captain,” resumed Mr. Sherwin, “that you do not *now* mean anything offensive to Mr. Norman.”

“Certainly not, Mr. Sherwin. Mr. Norman has handsomely disclaimed intending anything disrespectful to the Sovereign whom I have the honour to serve, and I therefore retract the expression.”

“Suppose we *now* drink the Sovereign’s health,” said Mr. Sherwin.

“With all my heart,” responded Mr. Norman.

“And I’m quite sure that our worthy host will be delighted to *propose* as well as drink it.”

“The King!” shouted Mr. Norman, “up-standing, and three times three!” Mr. Norman sprang to his feet before he had completed the sentence, and all the others simultaneously imitated his example. The toast was drunk amidst deafening plaudits.

“I am quite sure,” resumed Mr. Sherwin, “I only give expression to the mutual feelings of our worthy host and the gallant officer, when I say that they will be most happy to shake hands, and entirely forget all that has past.”

“With infinite pleasure,” responded both at once. They advanced and shook hands amidst the gratulations of all present. Harmony was then completely restored, and the remainder of the evening was spent in the most agreeable manner.

Mr. Norman had only one partner in the publishing business, and his name was Rogers

—a married man, and the father of a family. His notions on moral points were essentially the same as those of Mr. Norman and Joseph. He was in the habit, in his convivial moments, of talking loosely respecting the sacredness of the marriage obligation. Neither was he celebrated for an undue respect for the principles of honesty in his commercial transactions.

On the morning after the festive occasion to which we have alluded, Joseph called at the bibliopolic establishment of Rogers and Norman, for the purpose of seeing the latter. He had not yet arrived. Joseph was surprised at the confused manner of Mr. Rogers; and his surprise was heightened when he was not asked, as in similar circumstances he had invariably been before, to sit down till Mr. N. came. Just, however, as Joseph was leaving the place, he met Mr. Norman, and, in compliance with his request, was accompanying him inside the counter, when the latter was accosted by Mr. Rogers, who looked an impersonation of fury,

with "You —— scoundrel, how dare you, sir, ever look me again in the face?"

"What's the matter?" inquired Mr. Norman, in utter amazement, and with considerable trepidation.

"What's the matter! Your own conscience, you consummate villain, must, if you have one, tell you what's the matter."

"Upon my honour I don't understand you. What *can* be the meaning of this?"

Here Joseph withdrew, not wishing to be present at so unpleasant an altercation, especially as he had not the remotest idea of what were the circumstances which had led to it.

"If, sir, you have any regard for your own life, you will leave the counting-house directly, and never again enter the place where I am."

"Mr. Rogers, this unaccountable conduct requires explanation."

"Yours, sir, will admit of none, far less of justification."

"Your conduct perfectly astounds me."

"You ought to be astounded at your own villany."

"Pray explain the meaning of all this."

"Do you, sir, know whose handwriting that is?" said Mr. Rogers, showing Mr. Norman his own signature to a letter, but concealing everything else.

"That is my signature," remarked the other.

"And perhaps that also is your writing," said Mr. Rogers, holding before Mr. Norman the back of a letter addressed to Mrs. Rogers.

Mr. Norman turned as pale as death, and quivered like an aspen leaf.

"You consummate" —

Mr. Rogers, whose eye glared with indignation, and whose whole manner displayed an ungovernable rage, was about to renew his denunciations of the conduct of his partner, when Mr. Merton, a venerable-looking old gentleman, remarkable alike for his amiable manners and the moral rectitude of his conduct, entered the counting-house.

The moment the door opened, Mr. Rogers, without taking the slightest notice of Mr. Merton, hurried out of the place into an adjoining room. Mr. Merton, being intimate with both parties, was very much surprised at this; but still he took no notice of it to Mr. Norman.

In less than two minutes, the housemaid opened the door, and, advancing with tremulous step and flurried manner (caused by the excitement under which Mr. Rogers was labouring) towards Mr. Norman and Mr. Merton, who were both standing beside the desk inside the counter—she put a slip of paper into the hands of the latter; observing in faltering accents, “Mr. Rogers, sir, desired me to give you this.”

Mr. Merton opened the piece of paper and read as follows, the ink being scarcely dry:—
“Your conduct to my wife proves you to be one of the most atrocious scoundrels in existence; and if you do not quit the premises pre-

sently, or if you ever again dare to come into my presence, I solemnly declare that I will blow your brains out." The blood rushed to Mr. Merton's face, and he was seized with a fit of temporary stupefaction as he read this extraordinary note. On partially recovering from the confusion with which he had been overwhelmed, he placed the slip of paper in Mr. Norman's hands, observing, "What can be the meaning of this? My conduct to his wife! I have never spoken to Mrs. Rogers in my life. In fact, I have not the pleasure of knowing her even by sight."

"Oh! this is intended for *me*," groaned Mr. Norman, as he glanced his eyes over the contents of the piece of paper; "this is intended for me; the maid has given it to you by mistake."

Mr. Merton was scarcely less surprised on hearing this, than when he thought the opprobrious epithets and alarming threat were intended for himself. Still he was ignorant of

the precise cause of the quarrel between the bibliopolic partners. "I'll call some other time," remarked Mr. Merton, taking up his hat to quit the place. "Good morning, Mr. Norman, for the present."

"Good morning," sighed Mr. Norman.

Just as Mr. Merton was leaving the place, Joseph Jenkins re-entered, thinking the altercation between the two partners would by this time be over.

"Ah! Jenkins, this is a sad business," remarked Mr. Norman, as the other advanced to the desk.

"*What's* a sad business?" inquired Joseph, eagerly.

"Why, this affair of Mrs. Rogers and myself."

"I don't at all understand you."

"It's a horrible business."

"Pray explain."

"I may as well; it cannot be concealed any longer. I have been carrying on an improper

intimacy with Mrs. Rogers, and Rogers has found one of my letters to her, in which the fact is admitted."

"Ah! that is very awkward, certainly—a very awkward affair."

Joseph's notions of morality since his adoption of infidel principles did not dictate any stronger expression respecting the enormity of the crime of which his friend had avowed himself guilty. Of the crime itself, in fact, he felt no abhorrence at all. When he spoke of the awkwardness of the affair, he simply alluded to the social and commercial inconvenience which would probably attend the discovery of the seduction of the wife of his friend's partner.

"What's to be done?" inquired Mr. Norman.

"I think," replied Joseph, "your better way would be to leave the premises immediately, lest Rogers should re-enter, and, in the excitement of the moment, make an attempt on your life."

Mr. Norman took the hint, instantly left the premises, and hurried to his private residence, kept by a very interesting young woman, his own illegitimate daughter. He had not been ten minutes in the house, when he formed the resolution of eloping with Mrs. Rogers. With that view he wrote a cheque for a balance of £550 belonging to the business, then lying in their banker's hands. He immediately despatched a confidential messenger to the city for the purpose of procuring the money. On the arrival of the messenger, however, the answer was, "No effects." This was unaccountable to Mr. Norman; as he had himself, on the previous afternoon, added £230 to a former deposit of £320. He leaped into a cab, and hastened to the banker's to obtain an explanation of the mystery. The explanation was given. Mr. Rogers, the moment the bank was opened that morning, presented a cheque for, and of course immediately received, the entire amount. On the same day, it was discovered

that Miss Norman was *enciente*. Her elopement, the next morning, with Mr. Rogers afforded a clue to the parentage of the unborn infant.

CHAPTER XII.

Joseph forms another engagement—Writes leading articles for two papers of opposite politics—An awkward mistake—Its consequences.

VERY few of those engaged as reporters for the daily journals confine their services to them. They look out, and in almost every instance, with more or less success, for other kinds of literary employment. In no case does the common remark, that one thing leads to another, hold more true than in that of literature. Many of those engaged on the daily press of London, average from two to three guineas per week by working for weekly papers, in addition to their stated salary, which on most of the morning journals is five guineas per week. Joseph, in the course of a few months after his engage-

ment as reporter for the daily journal which has been repeatedly referred to, entered into an arrangement with the proprietor of two weekly papers to furnish for each a leading article, averaging a column in length. For this he was to receive two guineas weekly. Beyond writing the leading articles, he had no concern with, nor influence over, the papers. Arrangements of this nature, though unknown in the provinces, are quite common in London. Neither of the papers had a large circulation, and it was only by transferring the "general intelligence" of the one to the other, and in that way saving the expense of a second composition, that the proprietor got them to pay. The two journals, though belonging to the same proprietor, were as much opposed in character as it was possible, perhaps, to be. One was thoroughly democratic, and bore a title—"The Leveller"—which sufficiently indicated the destructive principles it advocated. It weekly launched the most terrible denunciations at the

devoted heads of the aristocracy, representing them as a confederacy of tyrants, who lived to feed and fatten on the industry of the working classes; and plainly hinted that their estates would be fair subjects for spoliation. The labouring classes were held up as the true nobility, because they were a nobility of nature's workmanship. While to the higher classes was ascribed every vice under the sun—and sometimes vices which even the sun itself has never witnessed—the masses were represented as possessing not only all the virtues which actually exist, but many which have never existed at all—except in the columns of “The Leveller.” The farmers were the objects of that journal's unceasing and most virulent vituperation; no week was suffered to elapse without a full share of coarse abuse being heaped on them. The other paper, “The Constitutionalist,” took (as already intimated) a directly opposite course. With it the aristocracy were everything; they were the glory, as they had proved the stay, of the

land. Without the higher classes, this country could not exist an instant in its present moral grandeur. The farmers, too, were a most worthy and singularly intelligent body of men. It was a "Farmer's Friend" journal. Agriculture was the life-blood of England's prosperity; trade and manufactures were nothing. The industrial portion of the community were the dregs of English society. The population of all large towns were a body of reckless democrats, having no respect for the rights of property, and undeserving the protection of a constitutional Government.

To undertake the writing of the leading articles of two papers, of such antagonist views on all the leading questions of the day, was what no honest man could have brought himself to do. Joseph, however, knew not what honesty in politics or literature meant. He had no compunctious visitings, no scruples of any kind, on the point. He at once accepted the offer, when made to him, to write the leading articles for

“The Leveller” and “The Constitutionalist.” But though untroubled by any reproaches of conscience on the subject, he felt that, if the circumstance of his furnishing the editorial articles to papers whose principles were so thoroughly antagonist, were to transpire, it would not have the effect of raising his character in the estimation of his friends; neither could it fail to operate very injuriously to him if, on any future occasion, he should attain distinction—which he fondly hoped he one day would—as a public man. He therefore stipulated with the proprietor of the papers, that his name should be kept a profound secret in connexion with the authorship of the articles. He himself, of course, took care not to breathe a whisper of the circumstance to his own acquaintances. All went on smoothly enough for a season. He possessed great readiness and versatility in writing on the topics of the day. What was more—lawyer-like, he could appear to great advantage on either side of a question. Before he had been three months

connected with the papers, the subscribers to each saw, or fancied they saw, a marked improvement in the "leading" department. The readers of the Tory and agricultural paper were in ecstasies with the contemptuous terms in which the editorial articles spoke of the "unwashed," and the "great manufacturing lords of the large towns;" while the freedom and fearlessness with which "The Leveller" assailed the aristocracy, denounced the corn laws, and exposed Tory corruption of every kind and wherever detected, raised the "unrepresented masses" to the third heaven of happiness. Nor was this all: week after week did "The Constitutionalist" reply, with unsparing severity, to the "gross misrepresentations" of "The Leveller;" while "The Leveller" "demolished with tremendous effect"—so, at least, its readers alleged—the tyrannical positions advanced by "The Constitutionalist." The result was, that the landlords and their tenants toasted, amidst loud plaudits, the "able and unflinching editor

of ‘The Constitutionalist,’” at all their public dinners; while the “unenfranchised millions,” never privileged to sit down to a public dinner—rarely, indeed, partaking of a dinner, however frugal, even at home—were obliged to content themselves with passing, amidst deafening acclamations, at their open-air meetings, their most “cordial thanks to the talented editor of ‘The Leveller,’ for his masterly and untiring advocacy of the interests of the working classes.” The natural consequence of all this was, that the circulation of both papers considerably increased. And as proprietors of public journals always, or, at least, with very few exceptions, test the competency of an editor by the effect which his writings have on the circulation, the reader will not be unprepared for the information, that the proprietor of “The Constitutionalist” and of “The Leveller” congratulated himself on the accession of Mr. Jenkins. He had, indeed, resolved, as a practical proof of this, on increasing his remuneration; and the

only question with him was, whether he ought to double it at once, or content himself with adding half-a-guinea a week to the previous guinea for each of the journals, and make the addition of the other half-guinea in two or three months, should the circulation of the papers continue to rise. In the meantime, Saturday, the hour of publication, was approaching. It was Friday evening, and both the papers must appear on the following day. Mr. Jenkins had not a line of leading article written for either journal, and the printers were besieging his apartments—for he wrote at home—for copy. He began to write with energy, and never quitted his seat until he had dashed off a leader for each paper. Somehow or other—he could not tell why—he was, on this occasion, seized with a vehement desire to write something unusually decided in tone and energetic in language. He was pleased with his success; for, on reading over the articles in manuscript, before despatching them to the printer, he thought that, in

point of boldness and vigour, they surpassed any of his previous effort. He wrote, as was his custom, on the first slip of each article, the name of the journal for which it was intended; and, having sent off the copy to the compositors, he went to bed on remarkably excellent terms with himself. He slept soundly until eight on the following morning, when, it being summer, he rose and started, by coach, for St. Alban's, where he remained until Monday afternoon; his duties for the morning journal with which he was connected, then requiring his presence in town.

In the hurry of the moment, Joseph had written the name of the wrong paper at the head of each of the articles—that is, he had assigned the democratic article to “The Constitutionalist,” and the violent Tory tirade against liberal principles, to “The Leveller.” The mistake was not discovered until the entire impression of each paper had been sold. In the leader of “The Constitutionalist”—the journal which

had hitherto been so staunch a supporter of ultra-Toryism, the Throne, the aristocracy, the Church, and the agricultural interest, there occurred the following passage:—"Toryism and tyranny are synonymous terms. The profligate men now in power would not hesitate a moment in letting loose their demon soldiery on every meeting of the people assembled to petition for the redress of their grievances, were it not that they dread the day of retaliation. They are individually and collectively, a parcel of as great despots as ever trod the earth. We could name among the members of the present Ministry, men whose bosoms are as destitute of humanity as was the bosom of Nero himself. The same may, unfortunately, be said with too much truth, of hundreds of the aristocracy. They are so many titled monsters; and the day, we trust, is not distant, when every vestige of 'the order' will be swept from off the face not only of this country, but of the earth. They prey on the life-blood of the working classes, whom they regard

with no more feeling or respect than they do the veriest reptile that crawls on the ground. With regard to the Church, again, we unhesitatingly pronounce her to be one of the greatest evils ever inflicted on this or any other country. What are her bishops, but so many drones, whose only idea of duty is, to loll in their carriages, to wallow in luxury, and to live in regal splendour? And what are her clergy, but a body of worthless men, whose only occupations seem to be fox-hunting, card-playing, dancing at balls, quaffing port at home, and spouting unadulterated Toryism, mixed with the most odious religious cant, at public dinners? Are we surprised at this? Not in the least. It is just what might be expected from that hideous system of priestcraft, which has been created and nursed by the religious establishment of this country—the worst religious establishment, beyond all comparison, that has ever disgraced or degraded any country on the face of the earth. Never will England know what real dignity is;

never will she enjoy genuine liberty—never will she attain true intellectual greatness, until her Church establishment is scattered to the winds of heaven, and the entire race of her parsons are utterly extinguished. With regard to the farmers, they, poor miserable men, are more to be pitied than blamed. They are the dupes of the clergy, and the slaves of their landlords. They are as ignorant as their own pigs; ay, and as obstinate, too. They have no more idea of their true interests, than the horned cattle which they feed and fatten for the market; and never will they be enlightened, until the abominable corn laws shall be totally repealed. The extinction of these diabolical imposts would be as much for their benefit—though they are so stupid as not to perceive it—as it would be for the advantage of the rest of the community.”

Such was one of the passages in the leading article of “The Constitutionalist.” The rest of the article was in a similar strain. The following was the commencing paragraph in the leader

of "The Leveller:"—"We live in eventful days; the aspect of public affairs is at this moment most portentous. There is a spirit abroad which, if not promptly checked, will, ere many months have elapsed, precipitate this country into a revolution of the most frightful character. That Throne under whose paternal care and powerful protection this country has risen to an unexampled pitch of prosperity, is menaced with destruction. That Church, which has proved the source of infinite blessings to England, is the object of the most deadly hatred of the lower classes; while her clergy, the most devoted and pure-minded body of men the world ever saw, are loaded with the worst of obloquy. Still more fierce, if that were possible, is the hatred which the working classes, under the tutorship of a band of ruffian demagogues, bear to the aristocracy of England. That body of men who are most feelingly alive to the welfare of the lower orders; who are ever foremost in works of benevolence; in

whose bosoms, in a word, is centred all that can adorn and dignify human nature—this excellent body of men, not only run the risk of having their estates confiscated, but of personally sharing the frightful fate of the French noblesse. The agricultural interest is threatened with immediate and utter ruin. The farmers are most grossly traduced; they are held up as being no better informed than the oxen which browse in their fields. In short, the working classes seem to have been of late converted into so many demons in human form. They are, as a body, steeped to the very ears in profligacy. They look forward with fiendish exultation to the contemplated subversion of social order—to the overthrow of the Throne, the destruction of the Church, the annihilation of the aristocracy, and the entire and irremediable ruin of the farmer. There is not a vice under heaven which does not luxuriate in their breasts. They are, in fact, prepared and panting to enact all the atrocities of the French revolution. Need

we say after this, what course the Government ought to pursue? The duty of Ministers is clear: increase the standing army; repeat, wherever necessary, the course pursued in 1819 at Manchester; prohibit all open-air meetings; and arrest and consign to the wholesome silence and solitude of our prison cells, some two or three score of their most noisy and violent demagogues."

The reader is left to conceive the effect which the two articles produced on the subscribers to the different papers. At first they were struck dumb with amazement. They read and paused in silence. They could hardly believe the evidence of their eyes. And yet there was no resisting that evidence; there stood the articles, in large bold letters, and in the most prominent part of the papers. What gave the leaders more effect, and added to the surprise and confusion of the readers, was the circumstance that, on that particular occasion, there was no other leading matter of any kind—though there

usually was some—in either of the journals. Boundless indignation succeeded a recovery from the first stun of surprise caused by the articles. One and all exclaimed, “We are grossly betrayed.” “Villain,” “traitor,” “apostate,” &c., were among the epithets most liberally applied to Mr. Jenkins. “The Constitutionalist” was publicly burnt in all the agricultural districts; and the editor himself would have run a great risk of receiving a similar doom, could he have been as easily laid hold of as his paper. The working classes mobbed the office of “The Leveller” on Monday morning; demolished the windows; and, but for the interposition of the police, would have shivered to pieces the unoffending printing-press, whence had emanated an article which had so flagrantly insulted and so grossly betrayed them. They uttered the most terrible imprecations on the editor, and were in excellent condition for tearing him to pieces, had he fallen into their hands. During every day of the week, the postman brought

loads of letters to "the editor," abusing him without measure and without mercy, and intimating that the writers had given up the paper. By the time Saturday had arrived, neither "The Constitutionalist" nor "The Leveller" had a score of subscribers left; and the few "from whom the editor had not heard," were those who had either been from home, or were in too remote a part of the country to be able to stop their paper that week. Next week witnessed the extinction of both journals. In life they were united (both belonging to the same proprietor, both issuing from the same press, both published at the same office), and in death they were not divided.

CHAPTER XIII.

Joseph forms a new literary engagement—Corrupt state of literary criticism in the metropolis—Sketches of the leading literary critics in London.

IN about two years after his settlement in the metropolis, Joseph obtained an engagement, at three guineas per week, to conduct the literary and dramatic department of “The Investigator,” a weekly newspaper of considerable reputation. This brought him into still more frequent and intimate intercourse with authors and publishers, and gave him an insight into matters connected with the literature of the day, of which he had not previously formed the remotest idea.

The corrupt state of literary criticism, whether in newspapers or periodicals, particularly surprised him. Not, indeed, that his notions of

morals were of that refined or rigid nature which made him regard with abhorrence the corruption he found pervading almost the whole of such criticism; but that, having suspected nothing of the kind before, the discovery possessed the interest and freshness which are usually associated with the knowledge of a novelty. He found that such a thing as honest criticism was very rarely to be met with. He knew the leading reviewers in the metropolitan newspapers and magazines, and heard—in confidence, of course—from their own lips the motives which dictated their notices of new publications. The reviewer in one journal denounced the author of a particular work, because he was a successful writer in a department of literature in which the reviewer himself had signally failed. Another author and his works were denounced, in unmeasured terms, by the literary critic of another journal, for no other reason than that the author, though entirely self-educated, had, by the force of his

genius, raised himself to distinction and importance in the literary world ; while the reviewer, though he had received all the advantages which a classical education could confer, had never been able, notwithstanding his repeated efforts, to acquire literary renown, or even to extend the knowledge of his name beyond the walls of the establishment in which "The Weekly Luminary" was printed. Other authors and their works, Joseph found to be systematically proscribed by certain critics, because the former would not associate with the latter, when spending their evenings over their glass and cigar in the taverns which they nightly frequented. Many critics ran down particular authors without any better reason for doing so, than that other critics had set them the example. A great deal of the hostile criticism which pervades our modern literature, has its origin or motive—if motive it may be called—in this circumstance. The minor reviewers, in very many instances, follow in the wake of the critics in

the more influential journals. They lack the moral courage, however favourably they may, in their consciences, think of the works of a particular author, to adventure a word on his behalf, if the reviewers in some of the leviathan journals have fallen foul of himself or his works. This is a painful fact; it is one which is very degrading to human nature; but all who are conversant with the literary criticism of the day know that it is a fact. Envy at the success of particular authors, without any intelligible motive for that envy, Joseph found to be, in a great many cases, the cause of the savage ferocity with which many popular writers were assailed. Where the critic has himself attempted success, but failed, in the same walk of literature, one could comprehend the feeling which would dictate a coarse and violent tirade against the productions of the triumphant author; but where an author has not, in any way, come in collision with his reviewer, the unqualified censure which the latter heaps on

the name and works of the author, is not so easily accounted for. In many instances the hostile criticism was seen by Joseph to have had no other motive than personal dislike to the writer. Our current criticism is very deeply tainted with this unworthy feeling. If an author happen to incur the personal displeasure of a reviewer, the latter rarely makes a distinction between his works and himself; but, by means of his works, indulges in his vindictive feelings towards himself. There were other authors, again, whom Joseph found to be habitually attacked by certain reviewers for no other reason than that the latter, being on terms of personal intimacy with the former, conceived that they were slighted in not being asked to dinner on particular occasions, when they fancied they ought to have been invited. What made the neglect the more unpardonable was that, according to their own notions on the subject, they had a much better claim to such attentions than certain other persons who re-

ceived them. None but those who have had opportunities of observing what takes place behind the curtain in the literary circles of the metropolis, could imagine the extent to which modern criticism is affected by this circumstance.

But it were an endless task to enumerate the various motives which dictate the hostile criticism to be met with in the periodical literature of the day. Equally various are the motives which prompt the extravagant praise, amounting to positive puffery, which so many books receive. If Joseph did not meet with instances in which praise was literally purchased with money, just as candidates for the representation of corrupt boroughs purchase the votes of profligate electors, innumerable instances were brought to his knowledge of lavish commendation having been insured by personal attentions on the part of the author to the reviewer. Personal friendship with the critic was found to be the secret why many authors were systemati-

cally praised in particular journals, no matter how poor and worthless their productions. With several of the less influential newspapers and magazines, the way to insure extravagant praise was discovered to be, the sending them an advertisement or two of the work itself. The praise of other journals, again, could be procured on still easier terms. They were satisfied if the compliment were paid them, of sending them a copy of the book immediately on its appearance.

But is it to be inferred from all this that, when Joseph first became acquainted with the secrets of metropolitan reviewing, there was no such thing as *honest* criticism? Far from it. There were several editors whose constant aim it was, after a careful and unbiassed examination of the works submitted to them, to form a just opinion of their merits, and to express that opinion with fairness, and yet with freedom and force. The reviewers in these journals sought to divest their minds of all prejudices and par-

tialities, and to speak of the book as impartially as if they had never before heard the name of the author. But the number of such persons, compared with that of the reviewers who were influenced by very different considerations, was very small indeed.

Nor is there any material difference between the state of our current literary criticism, and what it was when Mr. Jenkins first became acquainted with it. The same causes are still in active operation to produce dishonest reviews of books. A really unbiassed honest piece of criticism, if found in several of our leading journals that could be named, would be a moral rarity worthy of being rescued from the corrupt mass by which it is surrounded, and handed down to posterity as something which merits preservation. A glance at some of the more prominent reviewers of the day, will serve to give a better idea of the real state of literary criticism than any general observations that might be made on the subject.

First of all, then, there is MR. DODSLEY, of "The Weekly Review." He is an unsuccessful author himself, and cannot endure the thought that any other writer should be successful. To hear of the literary triumphs of an author—no matter in what department of literature—is gall and wormwood to his soul. And as *some* authors are always meeting with more or less success, notwithstanding the thousands who are constantly failing in their efforts to emerge from obscurity, he, unhappy man! is kept in a state of perpetual wretchedness. The moment he discovers the slightest symptom of a new author beginning to attract attention, he sets to work, and belabours the rising writer without measure and without mercy. The unfortunate author is assailed with a brisk and unintermitting volley of abusive epithets. He is called coarse, vulgar, dull; he is without the slightest pretensions to either talent or intelligence. He is an upstart in literature, a pretender, an impostor, an empiric. Every term,

indeed, of a degrading or depreciatory kind, which the critic's vocabulary can furnish, is applied to him. To bring him down again to the level of the common herd of authors, or, if that cannot be done, to prevent his ascending higher on the ladder of fame, is the great object of Mr. Dodsley; and, to the accomplishment of that object, he devotes himself with the zeal of an apostle. If he could only have his own way, there would be no author of distinction at all. Nor does "this sour and surly critic"—for so he is generally called—content himself with his depreciating and vituperative labours in his journal; his tongue is as actively and incessantly engaged in the ungenerous avocation, as his pen. He never opens his lips in society, when modern literature is the topic, without disparaging one or more authors, who have already risen to reputation, or are in a fair way of rapidly rising to it. Depreciation of merit is the element in which he lives; without indulging in it, he could not, indeed, exist at all. It is a

necessity of his nature. If he ever, in the columns of his journal, or in the intercourse of private life, happen to venture a word of praise, the object of his commendation is always some author of no reputation, and who has not even the remotest chance of obtaining any. Such authors, he thinks, he may praise with safety; because nobody else ever has praised them, and never, in all probability, will bestow a word of commendation on them. Should any such, however, by accident, rise into distinction, Mr. Dodsley, in utter disregard of his former praise, would be the first to seek to pull them down again.

MR. PARDON is the literary editor of "The Hercules." He is constantly talking of the perfect purity of his criticisms. Take his own word for it, and there is not a more honest critic in Christendom. From the frequency with which he asserts his entire independence of booksellers, authors, and everybody and everything else, you would think that he was, were

such a thing possible, honest to excess. You are almost sorry to see a reviewer so exceedingly scrupulous about the opinions he delivers respecting the books that come before him. His honesty, you take it for granted, must, at least, in these days of literary corruption, be a very serious inconvenience to him. It is not enough that he feels a consciousness of his uncorrupted and incorruptible integrity, but you would fancy that his very existence must be wearing away in the intensity of his anxiety, that his critical integrity should, like the character of Cæsar's wife, be above suspicion. There is a common proverb, that you have more than reason to doubt a person's possession of that very quality of which he is loudly and constantly boasting. In the case of Mr. Pardon's honesty as a literary critic, you are justified, not only in doubting the existence of the virtue, but in denying it altogether. A more dishonest reviewer is not to be met with. The books of certain authors and certain publishers, are sure to be praised to

the echo : those of certain other authors and publishers are equally sure to be visited with unqualified censure. If he have a sufficient motive for it, a review of a particular book will appear before he has read a page of it ; ay, even before he has seen it. And the review will consist of either extravagant praise or unqualified condemnation, accordingly as he is favourably or unfavourably inclined to the publisher or author.

MR. SAMPSON, of " The Moonbeam," has a very simple test by which to ascertain, at first sight, the merits of a book. Is it, or is it not, ushered into the world under the bibliopolic auspices of Mr. Drummond ? If it be, then it is all, in point of literary excellence, that the most fastidious taste could desire. If it be brought out by any other publisher, it may be worth a moment's consideration, whether it is to be damned by faint praise, or denounced at once and in plain terms as a " disgrace to the literature of the land." The same author publishing with Mr. Drummond, is a man of very different

intellectual calibre, from what he is when the name of Mr. Cramston—Mr. Drummond's bibliopolic rival—graces the lower part of the title-page. A work published by the former, is unquestionably the most talented and extraordinary production which has appeared during the present century; and the author himself stands first in the first class of those writers who have cultivated the same department of literature. If brought out by Mr. Cramston, the work, though in "the same department of literature," is "a most trashy and contemptible production," and the writer is the dullest dog that ever put pen to paper. It has happened to Mr. Sampson more than once, to write an elaborate review, under a misapprehension as to who the publisher was; and, on making the discovery, he has immediately rectified the mistake, by withdrawing the first review, and inditing another in exactly the opposite strain. Mr. Gordon was in the habit of publishing with Mr. Cramston; and every successive book he

brought out, was declared to be the vilest stuff ever palmed on an unsuspecting and patient public. Some time ago, he had reason to change his bibliopole, and made an arrangement with Mr. Drummond for the publication of a new work, in the same department of literature as that to which his previous ones belonged. Mr. Sampson at once had the discernment to perceive that the new book was "one of surpassing merit, abundantly studded with intellectual gems, and sparkling in every page with the coruscations of a genius of the loftiest order."

MR. SWALLOW has, for some years, been intrusted with the review department of "The Inspector," a weekly journal of considerable celebrity and circulation. He was never yet known to notice a book at all, without being actuated by some private consideration. The attentions paid to him by the authors of the various works he notices, or the terms on which he happens to be with the publishers, are the only matters which weigh with him in the

opinions he forms, or, rather, expresses of new books; for his private and public opinions are two very distinct things, and are often in direct antagonism to each other. *Any* author who can afford, and is disposed to give, a good dinner, can *command* Mr. Swallow's unqualified commendation of his work. With him, a "splendid affair," in the shape of a dinner, was never yet known to fail of its effect; it covers a multitude of literary sins. If there be faults, he not only has no eye to detect them—far less a heart to expose them—but he discerns innumerable beauties where they have no existence. Countless as the sands on the seashore, are the high praises he has penned under the generous sympathies inspired by the after-dinner Champagne or Madeira of authors consuming with anxiety for the fate of their new-born literary offspring. It is certain that he never yet wrote a kindly critique without having previously done ample justice to the creature-comforts of the writer or publisher. It is doing

him no more than justice to say, that he has never indited a severe sentiment, or made use of an unkind expression, while the remembrance of the author's or publisher's well-furnished table has been fresh upon his mind. Only it is to be observed, that *one* dinner will not suffice for *two* books, however close on the publication of the first may be the appearance of the second. He reasons with himself—and the *reasonableness* of his notions can, after all, be hardly questioned—that surely every good review deserves a good dinner. Nor is this all: if it so happen, which it does occasionally—and a very recent and very remarkable instance could be adduced—that an author sends Mr. Swallow a portion of his work before the whole has passed through the press, he will readily, if previously invited to dinner, elaborately notice the work as unpublished; only, when it is completed, he expects, as a matter of right, to be asked to celebrate its publication over another splendid dinner.

The second dinner will insure a second notice; but, if there be no second dinner, there will not only be no second notice, but a full retraction of all the previous commendation; the reason assigned by the reviewer for the change in his estimate of the work being, that he had not then seen it in its completed state. This is so likely to be supposed nothing better than mere invention, that it may be necessary to repeat the assurance already given of an instance of the kind having lately occurred in the case of a popular author and a well-known reviewer. Something similar takes place, if the author bring out a new work without having asked Mr. Swallow to dinner. The latter does not, in such a case, content himself with taking no notice of the book, but abuses it as liberally as he praised those previous books of the writer which were issued into the world amidst the genial feelings inspired by "three courses and a dessert."

"Clayton, my dear fellow," said Mr. Ransom,

grasping the other eagerly by the hand, as he met him a few days ago in Regent Street ;
“ Clayton, my dear fellow, that was a most atrocious notice of your new work in the last number of ‘ The Inspector.’ ”

“ Why, it was rather, certainly.”

“ What in the name of wonder could Swallow have meant ? He has never served you so before.”

“ No, certainly not ; I must do him at least *that* justice.”

“ Surely there must be something private at the bottom of this abominable review.”

“ You’re quite right, Ransom ; there is.”

“ So, then, you’ve had some private quarrel.”

“ Oh, no, nothing of the kind ; a mere oversight on my part. I have another work on the eve of its appearance ; it will be all set right again, whenever it is brought out.”

“ I don’t understand you,” remarked Ransom.

“ Can I depend on your keeping a secret, if I let you into one ? ”

“ You may.”

“ On your honour ? ”

“ Upon my honour.”

“ You’ll never give the slightest hint about what I am going to mention.”

“ Never ; I give you my solemn promise.”

“ Then the whole secret of this vile review of my book is, that I did not ask Swallow to dinner on its publication.”

“ Are you serious ? ” inquired Ransom, amazed at what he had heard.

“ Perfectly so.”

“ Can it be possible that a person who has the control of the review department of such a journal as ‘ The Inspector,’ could be influenced in his criticism by such unworthy, such thoroughly contemptible considerations ? ”

“ The fact is as I have stated. I *know* it,” answered Clayton.

“ And do you really believe that Swallow can be so utterly lost to all sense of self-respect, so totally regardless of consistency, that by in-

viting him to a 'feed' immediately before your next work appears, you can insure a most complimentary notice of it?"

"I am certain of it. And what is more, not a favourable notice of the new work only, but a virtual recantation of all the abuse he has heaped on myself and my present work, by the unqualified panegyrics he will then lavish on me as a literary man."

"I confess I shall wait with some impatience the publication of your next work. When will it be out?"

"In five or six weeks."

Six weeks elapsed, and the work made its appearance. On the day of its publication, Swallow, with several other literary men, partook of a sumptuous dinner in Mr. Clayton's cottage at Old Brompton. On the Sunday following, "The Inspector" devoted five of its columns to a review of the new work, which was eulogised to the echo; and Mr. Clayton himself, who but two months before had been

represented as an author whose productions were discreditable to modern literature, was now held up as one of the most philosophic, elegant, and able writers of the day.

MR. SHEPHERD'S test of literary merit is, the success, or otherwise, of an author's works. He has never yet known a successful author who was not a man of extraordinary genius. On the other hand, he never could discern the slightest traces of talent where the author was obscure. The pages of his "Literary Miscellany" never yet contained a word of encouragement to a struggling author; neither, on the other hand, is an instance on record, during the fifteen years he has been a weekly reviewer, in which he has omitted to bestow the most fulsome adulation on authors of celebrity. When a new author appears in the literary vineyard, he maintains an unbroken silence as to his merits, until he sees the tide of popularity setting in either in his favour, or against him. If the former, the panegyrics which Mr. Shepherd heaps upon

him are nauseating from their extravagance ; but, if the probability be that the author is to be unsuccessful, "The Literary Miscellany" will always be found among the first and most frequent in its efforts to consign the poor fellow to the depths of obscurity. The jackass had a kick to bestow on the dead lion.

MR. JACKSON, the editor of the literary department of "The Mercury," has a mode of reviewing which differs from each and all of the modes to which we have been referring. He praises *all* the books, if they possess any considerable marketable value, which are forwarded to him. Aware, however, that, if praise were uniform and constant, it would lose much of its worth, and he himself be charged with being deficient in the critical quality of discrimination, he systematically denounces and abuses all the works which are *not* transmitted to the office of "The Mercury." Of course it is not necessary to read a work before abusing it. Mr. Jackson takes the title of the book from

the advertisements in the daily press, and then appends to it a string of vituperative epithets of the most general kind, such as the following:—
“This most illiterate author and contemptible production;” “a parcel of the greatest rubbish that ever issued from the press;” “a dull, stupid, ignorant author;” “a writer who is a disgrace to the literature of the age,” &c.

From these “illustrations” of the present state of our literary criticism—and they are, we ought to repeat, no imaginary cases—it will be seen that the “opinions of the press” on a new work, whether favourable or adverse, are, in the main, very little to be depended on. The public, happily, are beginning to make this discovery. Time was when authors who were deficient in moral courage, were to be written down by hostile reviewers, and when trashy productions could be puffed into something like celebrity by critics whose praise had been virtually purchased by the pudding and pies of the author; but, fortunately, this state of

things no longer exists. Every month furnishes the most unanswerable proof, that neither books nor authors of merit are to be written down by the attacks of hostile reviewers; while every week affords one or more confirmations of the position, that a worthless book is no longer to be lauded into fame.

CHAPTER XIV.

Farther observations on the corrupt state of literary criticism in the metropolis—Authors of title or standing in society—The way in which they contrive to get favourable notices of their books—Literary coteries—General observations.

IN the preceding chapter various illustrations have been given of the corrupt state of our literary criticism. References have also been made to the reasons which induce reviewers to endeavour to run down certain authors. The uninitiated in these matters will naturally ask, “How happens it that, not in one or two journals only, but in the great majority of our metropolitan publications, *every* book brought out by particular authors receives the most unqualified commendation, however great and manifold may be its blemishes?” No one, who knows anything of the existing state of criticism in

London, can be at a loss for an answer to the question.

The explanation of the mystery is to be found in the fact, that the authors referred to, who will be found, in almost every case, to be persons of title or distinction, indirectly purchase the praise by the attentions they show to the reviewers.

A few examples will set the matter in a clearer light than any general observations which could be put into the mouth of Mr. Jenkins, or which might be made by the author of these volumes.

Among the houses to which Joseph was occasionally invited to dinner, after it had become generally known that he was the principal reviewer in a journal of established reputation and influence, was that of Lady Dartmoor. She gave sumptuous entertainments; and, as her ladyship had the reputation of being a great beauty as well as a popular authoress, the various reviewers invited to her parties were so gratified

with the compliment paid them, that they felt as if they could not sufficiently praise her works in return.

On the second occasion on which he had been present at one of Lady Dartmoor's "splendid parties"—for so they were called by general consent—he missed several acquaintances connected with the review department of the metropolitan press, whom he had seen at the first dinner. He inquired of Mr. Monteith, one of the guests on both occasions, the reason of this.

"Ah, I see," remarked the other, "that you are not yet acquainted with the way in which her ladyship manages these matters."

"My question," said Joseph, "is a virtual admission of my ignorance on the point. How *does* she manage such matters?"

"Very adroitly and very systematically," replied the other. "Of course, Jenkins," he added, "I speak in confidence."

"I understand that perfectly; and what you say shall never escape my lips."

“Well, then, Lady Dartmoor makes a point of getting acquainted with every reviewer of any note in London, and keeps a list of their names, divided into three classes. The first class includes the names of those who have the control of the review department of the leading journals. In the second class are to be found the names of reviewers connected with respectable, but not first-rate, newspapers or periodicals; while, under the third head are written the names of persons who *do*, as she herself remarks, ‘the review department of journals of limited circulation, and still more limited influence.’”

“But,” interrupted Joseph, “that does not explain why some of those reviewers I met with at Lady Dartmoor’s first party were absent from the second.”

“I should,” answered the other, “have come to that in a moment or two, had you allowed me to go on. For some years past she has, on an average, brought out three books annually. Now the regulation she has laid down for her

guidance as to the frequency or infrequency with which to issue her invitations is this: The first class are invariably invited to dinner about a fortnight before, and about a week after, the publication of a new work. When sending the preliminary invitation, no reference is made to any new forthcoming production; but the question as to when she intends to bring out another work, is naturally put by some of her literary guests in the course of the evening's conversation, and she is thus led, as it were accidentally, to mention that she is on the eve of re-appearing in the character of authoress. On each successive occasion she expresses her apprehensions that her book will be a failure. Of course, all present dissent from her conclusions. She is told to banish her fears, and to assure herself of her wonted success. It is unnecessary to add that, putting out of view the genial influence of a magnificent dinner, the fact of all present having virtually staked their literary discernment on the merits of a book they have not seen, and even

of whose nature and title they are probably ignorant, feel under a moral obligation to back up their opinion, and to endeavour to bring about the fulfilment of their predictions, by lavishing the most liberal commendations on the work, when it makes its appearance. But, to guard against the possibility of any mistake in the matter—to make assurance doubly sure of a favourable notice—a copy of the book, the moment it is out, is sent to each of the reviewers who were at her table, accompanied with a pleasantly-penned note, inviting him to dine with her ladyship on an early day, which, of course, she duly names.”

“He certainly,” remarked our hero, “would be an ill-conditioned reviewer who could say aught against a book which was forwarded to him under such circumstances.”

“Ay, and destitute would he also be of gratitude and gallantry did he not exhaust his vocabulary of praise in bringing it before the public. Would he not?”

“He certainly would.”

“And now,” resumed Mr. Monteith, after a moment’s pause ; “and now, with regard to the second class of reviewers on her ladyship’s list. Their notices of her works being of subordinate importance, they only receive one invitation—namely, the one which precedes the publication of her ladyship’s book. This will explain why several of those who were present on the first occasion you were here, which was a dinner *before* publication, were not on the second. Does it not?”

“It certainly does. The names of the absentees, in other words, are to be found in the list of class two.”

“Precisely so.”

“Well, this is certainly something new to me. I never heard a whisper of anything of the kind before. But how does her ladyship deal with the *third* class of reviewers on her list?”

“Oh, she finds it a very easy matter to

manage them. They are generally men who are so proud at the circumstance of being asked to the house of a lady of title and celebrity at all, that they will be contented with anything. She is well aware of this, and consequently does not ask them to dinner or supper, but deems it enough if she invite them to a *converzationne*, at which coffee and a few glasses of wine, and sandwiches, constitute the only traces of festivity which they can discern in her ladyship's house."

"And they invariably praise her productions to the echo, in consideration of this little act of attention."

"They do, except in the few instances in which one or two of their number turn refractory, and are offended at the fancied slight put upon them by not inviting them in the same way, and on the same occasions, as the others."

"So then, after all," pursued Joseph, "Lady Dartmoor's books are *sometimes* 'cut up.'"

"Oh! no; hardly ever. The reviewers in

question content themselves with passing by her works without any notice at all."

But Lady Dartmoor is not the only popular authoress in the metropolis who has a coterie of persons calling themselves literary men always at her beck, and who, in their zeal to serve her, do not wait her bidding, but anticipate her wishes. Lady Carrington, another authoress of distinction, is equally happy in her literary acquaintances. She, however, has a method of her own of "managing" her men; a method which is, undoubtedly, less expensive than that of Lady Dartmoor, and yet is, if her ladyship's own testimony may be credited, fully as efficient. She has not only repeatedly heaped the warmest eulogiums on three or four of the leading London reviewers, in private conversation, when she knew her commendations could not fail to be conveyed to them; but she has, by way of parenthesis, introduced their names, and the names of their respective journals, into one of her works, amidst a profusion of praise which

well might put the most gifted to the blush. She reasons, and reasons very justly, that, if she can only secure the unqualified commendation of the leviathan reviewers, the "small fry," as she calls them, of the minor journals will, as a matter of course, follow in their wake. Lady Carrington has also her literary dinners, but they are neither so frequent nor so sumptuous as those of Lady Dartmoor. She not only does not, like the latter, celebrate the publication of every new work of hers by *two* dinners—one immediately before, and another immediately after, the birth of the book; but ushers all her minor productions into existence without the pomp and circumstance of a dinner at all; while the publication of her larger or more important books is honoured with only *one* dinner to her literary friends. The soundness of her theory, that to have the same extravagant praise bestowed on a trifling work as on an important three-volume production, is only to deprive the commendation of the latter of its effect—has been abun-

dantly confirmed by the best of all proofs—namely, experience. And, as she issues her cards of invitation to literary dinners less frequently than her rival, Lady Dartmoor, so she has, on such occasions, a much more limited number of guests. The literary friends at her dinner-parties are usually limited to seven, and almost always consist of the same persons. When Mr. Jenkins' name was first put on her ladyship's list, he made an eighth reviewer. On the first occasion on which he dined at Lady Carrington's, there were seven literary men, including himself. He was personally acquainted with three of the reviewers; but her ladyship's other three literary guests were wholly unknown to him. Anxious to ascertain who or what they were, more especially as in the conduct of all there was something which struck him as peculiar, he next morning called on Mr. Bridget, one of the three whom he knew, for the purpose of learning from him some particulars respecting them.

“Who was that large-featured person, with swarthy complexion, and black curly hair, named Manson, who sat last night on your right, at Lady Carrington’s party?”

“Oh, he is a man whose means and mode of life are a mystery. No one knows where or how he contrives to procure a single sovereign; for, while he confessedly has no fixed income, he is not known ever to have earned a sixpence by his literary labours.”

“If not a literary man,” inquired Joseph, “what induces her ladyship to ask him to her literary parties?”

“Because she finds him exceedingly useful.”

“In what way? I don’t exactly see how he can be of any service to her, as an authoress.”

“Though not,” replied Mr. Bridget, “a literary man, in the sense in which the phrase is usually understood—that is, as the author of one or more works, or articles in periodicals, he is a literary man in this sense, that he has

read a great deal, is very intelligent, and, though not known to have written anything, acquits himself in such a manner in conversation as to leave the impression that he is a man of very superior talents."

"But still I cannot comprehend," remarked Joseph, "in what way he can be of service to Lady Carrington."

"In this way," replied Mr. Bridget, "that, whenever her ladyship brings out a new work, he employs himself for several consecutive days, to the exclusion of everything else, in lauding it to the third heaven. Wherever he goes, and in whatever company he mingles, he introduces her ladyship's new work, and lavishes the highest encomiums on it. He thus performs the part of a locomotive advertiser; at once raising her reputation, and creating a great demand for the book at the circulating libraries."

"And has Lady Carrington a due sense of the obligation under which she lies to Mr. Manson?"

“ She is quite aware of the service he renders her; and yet she speaks of him in very disrespectful terms. ‘ He is,’ she says, ‘ shockingly vulgar, but very useful, and therefore he must be *tolerated*.’ ”

“ Does she really speak in that way of a person who thus almost degrades himself in his zeal to serve her ? ”

“ She does, and in doing so is by no means singular. I could mention at least a dozen authors, male and female, moving in the better circles of society, who privately speak in the same or similar terms of reviewers; who, because they are asked to their parties, commit high treason against literature, by heaping the most fulsome adulation on every book they bring out, no matter how worthless it may be. ‘ I observed at your last party, Mr. Forbes, the literary editor of “ The Independent,” ’ said Mr. Bosworth, one evening, to Mrs. Cavendish, the fashionable authoress of ‘ The Shrew,’ and other three-volume works. ‘ Oh yes,’ she replied, ‘ he’s

a horrid brute ; I detest the very sight of him ; but what can I do ? To invite him immediately before the publication of a new work, is the only way of insuring a favourable notice of it ; and, you know, that is an object.' And yet," continued Mr. Bridget, "though Mrs. Cavendish thus detests Mr. Forbes, and feels as if her splendid drawing-room were polluted by his presence, she lavishes upon him the greatest attentions when there. And so it is in most of the other cases where literary men are invited to the dinners and 'at homes' of the fashionable authors in the metropolis ; they are looked upon as mere tools, that may be used whenever required. The titled and the rich entertain very little real respect, very little sincere regard for literary men ; as is proved by the fact, that the moment the influence of the latter in the literary world is gone, the doors of these persons are closed against them. Nor is this all. They will even scarcely deign to give them a nod of recognition as they whirl past

them in their carriages in the streets. It is much to be regretted that literary men—those of them, especially, who conduct the review departments of the public journals—have not more respect for themselves; if they had, they would command much more of the respect of those above them than is at present accorded to them.”

Joseph, comparatively limited though his acquaintance was with the ways of the fashionable world, was forcibly struck with the observations of Mr. Bridget, and he resolved that they should not be lost upon him.

When Mr. Bridget had concluded his observations, Joseph remarked that there was another who sat opposite him, whose name he could not remember. “Pray,” he added, “who or what is he?”

“Oh, that young man,” remarked Mr. Bridget, “is a Mr. Puffwell.”

“Is he of any sensible service to her ladyship, in her capacity of author?”

“ Oh, very great indeed ! ”

“ In what way ? ”

“ Though not himself immediately connected with any publication, he is on intimate terms with several editors, and they occasionally—indeed, I may say frequently—insert gratuitously paragraphs from his pen respecting her new works.”

“ You don’t mean reviews ! ” interrupted Joseph.

“ Oh, no, short paragraphs inserted among the miscellaneous intelligence of the paper. In length they rarely exceed eight or ten lines, but they are well adapted to tell.”

“ What may be their nature ? ”

“ They are a good deal varied. If, for example, the book, soon after its appearance, be exciting some attention, a paragraph forthwith appears in the papers to whose columns he has access, to the effect that Lady Carrington’s new work, ‘ the best that she has produced,’ is exciting a very great sensation in the literary

and fashionable circles of the metropolis; or, if it be meeting with a tolerable sale, a paragraph appears representing the demand as very great; and the paragraph is so ingeniously or adroitly worded, that the public go away with the impression that there is something so extraordinary in the interest or the merit of the work, that the editor has deemed the circumstance worthy of mention among the news of the day. The effect of this paragraph is, to excite that very interest in the work which it professes to record as being already felt."

"That is to me a new way," observed Joseph, "of puffing a book."

"And, you might have added, a most effectual one."

"Has Mr. Puffwell ever written anything himself?"

"Never; and yet he contrives to puff himself off, by an ingenious device, as a literary man."

"What *is* the ingenious device?"

“ Whenever an anonymous work, newly published, begins to attract attention and acquire popularity, and conjectures are hazarded as to the authorship, he sends a note to each of the metropolitan papers, to the effect, that, as he has been very generally named as the author of the particular work, he hopes the editor will permit him to mention that he is *not* the author.”

“ Does he do this without any one having represented him as the author?” inquired Joseph, with no inconsiderable surprise.

“ He does; and therein consists the cool assurance of the thing. Nobody who knows him would ever suspect him of the authorship of *any* work of merit, for he is a man of no talent; and of course the public generally, to whom his name is unknown, would never think of affiliating any unfathered production on him. By this singular expedient, he has contrived to obtain a sort of reputation for literary talent and acquirements; for those who see his disclaimer

of the authorship of a work of merit, naturally infer that, if he were not capable of producing such a work, it would not be ascribed to him. He published a letter, a few weeks before Sir Walter Scott confessed himself to be the author of the 'Waverly Novels,' to the effect, that, as he had been repeatedly pointed at as the author of the 'Northern Fictions,' he thought it would be unjust to the real author of those splendid productions, were he not to state, in the most unequivocal terms, that he was not only not the author, but that he had had no hand whatever in their production! Shortly afterwards, Mr. Puffwell energetically disclaimed the authorship of 'Almack's'—a work which excited a great deal of interest, ten or eleven years ago, and respecting the authorship of which there was a great deal of guessing at the time. And had he been a contemporary of Junius, he would have published a very decided disclaimer of the authorship of the celebrated letters which appeared under that name."

“ Oh, I remember,” remarked Joseph, after hearing Mr. Bridget’s curious statement—“ oh, I remember having, on several occasions, seen the name of Puffwell attached to disclaimers, in the public journals, of the authorship of various works.”

“ Then that is the person you saw last night at Lady Carrington’s.”

“ There was a third,” pursued Joseph, “ wholly unknown to me, who sat at your left. Who is he ?”

“ That is a Mr. Warden ; one of the most conceited persons in London. He has never written a line in his life, except in the shape of an occasional newspaper paragraph ; and yet he is unceasingly engaged in decrying the works of successful authors, and saying how much better he himself could have written on the same subject.”

“ I suspect,” observed Joseph, “ he is not singular in that respect. There are hundreds in London, calling themselves literary men, who

have not written, nor are capable of writing, a page of passable matter on any subject, whose sole occupation is, to decry and depreciate the works of others."

"Very true," remarked Mr. Bridget; "but this Mr. Warden has the happy knack of persuading many of his literary friends that he is actually a genius of the first order. And thus, though no author at all, and wholly incapable of writing a passable page on any subject, he not only himself enjoys the delightful delusion, that he is a literary man of the highest talents, but receives from others the homage which is due to the most distinguished merit."

"He is certainly a lucky man," remarked Joseph, "thus to enjoy a first-rate literary reputation, though wholly destitute of all title to it."

"He is, indeed," responded Mr. Bridget; "especially when there are so many instances on record, in which the authors of works of the very highest order of merit have never been

fortunate enough to emerge from obscurity, or even to have their private admirers."

"And such are some of the leading persons connected with the review departments of the metropolitan press," observed Joseph.

"Yes; and they would resent it as an insult, were you to throw out the slightest imputation on their honesty or independence."

"And the way you have described is that in which we are to account for the extravagant and invariable praise bestowed on the books of certain authors."

"It is."

What a painful picture does it present of the alleged manly independence and incorruptible integrity of which we hear so much in connexion with the literary criticism of the metropolis! There is scarcely such a thing as fairness, impartiality, or honesty, in literary criticism. The public are beginning to discern this. They have, in so many instances, met with books which, though most extravagantly praised,

were the greatest trash that was ever penned ; and, on the other hand, with meritorious works which had been loaded with the coarsest abuse, that they have all but ceased to repose any confidence in the opinion of new books expressed by the public press. Much has been said of late respecting the bribery and corruption which prevailed at the last general election ; and legislative measures are to be taken with the view of preventing a recurrence of the evils. Bribery and corruption are scarcely less prevalent in the world of literary criticism, than in the world of politics ; only that the bribery in the case of literature, instead of being practised through means of money, is chiefly effected through means of what, in the political world, is called “treating.” In the case of literary criticism, Parliament can pass no act to put an end to the corruption which exists. It is a thing which cannot be reached—an evil which cannot be remedied by the Legislature. It is only by a fearless exposure of the great literary

nuisance, that any one can hope to abate it. The evil is lamented by many authors, but they want the moral courage to grapple with it. This is to be regretted. Were two or three influential writers to expose to the light of day, each in his own way, the secret springs of our metropolitan criticism, they would soon put an end to the existing corruption; and thus at once do an essential service to modern literature, and to the cause of morals. But should the more honest class of authors, though mourning over the corrupt and degraded state of our literary criticism, continue to shrink from what they are aware must be the unpleasant consequences of entering the lists with dishonest reviewers—there only remains the satisfaction of hoping that the evil will eventually reach such a height as to insure its own cure.

CHAPTER XV.

Mr. Lovegood brings out a new work—Conversation between him and Joseph on reviewing books in the periodicals of the day.

ABOUT this time Mr. Lovegood, of whom we have for a season lost sight, brought out a new work; and Joseph, who, notwithstanding the numerous defects in his character, possessed, in no ordinary degree, the redeeming quality of gratitude, was gratified with the circumstance, because he thought it would afford him an opportunity of serving him.

Joseph called one morning on Mr. Lovegood, and, after an interchange of the usual courtesies, intimated that he would be happy to publish in

the weekly journal with which he was connected, any notice of Mr. Lovegood's new book which might be sent him.

"A notice to be *sent* you!" remarked Mr. Lovegood, with manifest surprise.

"Yes; any notice which you yourself would like to appear."

"You don't mean that I should write it myself!"

"Where would be the harm," answered Joseph, "if you did? It's often done."

"What! authors review their own works?"

"Even so."

"I had hardly believed such a thing was possible," observed Mr. Lovegood. "I would rather a thousand times over, that no line should ever appear in the shape of a notice of any work of mine, and that a copy should never be sold, than pen one syllable in its favour."

"But could you not get some friend, who has more time on his hands than I can spare, to

write an elaborate and commendatory notice of your work?"

"To ask a friend to praise it," replied Mr. Lovegood, "would be the next most unworthy thing to praising it myself. I have never, on any occasion, bespoken a word of commendation for any of my productions, though my intimacy with various reviewers would have insured a ready compliance with my wishes."

"I think," rejoined Joseph, "that you are much too scrupulous, considering the frequency with which such things are done."

"The conduct of others," observed Mr. Lovegood, "must not be the rule of mine. If they do discreditable actions, that would be no justification for my doing them. The question with every honest and honourable man will be, whether an action be in itself right or wrong. To ask another to praise one's own work, is practically the same, if the book be praised by the party to whom the request was preferred, as if the commendatory notice had proceeded

from the author's own pen. I should have no hesitation in asking a reviewer to notice any work of mine ; but I should feel bound, from a regard to my own peace of mind, and in order to preserve my own self-respect, to accompany the request with a distinct intimation, that I wished the work to be noticed in exactly the same way as if the reviewer did not know the author. On that principle I have ever acted, and hope ever shall act."

"Then," remarked Joseph, "I will write a notice of your work myself; but, before inserting it, will send you the manuscript for your inspection. If you see anything in it you don't like, you can put your pen through it."

"I beg you will not send me the manuscript; for, to strike out censure, should there be any, is only a degree less unworthy than inditing praise. I have, on several occasions, had manuscript notices of former works unexpectedly sent me, accompanied with a request that I would cancel whatever passages or sentences

I might dislike; but in no instance have I ever altered a word—unless, indeed, the notice contained some glaring error as to fact, or something which might be personally offensive, and had no connexion, one way or other, with the merits or demerits of the work.”

“I think you carry your conscientious scruples too far,” suggested Joseph.

“I can only say that I think differently. At all events, it is to me the source of a pleasure which I would not part with for any earthly consideration, that, whatever may be my status in the literary world, I have resorted to no unworthy means to obtain it. To me the highest literary reputation ever enjoyed would possess no attractions, nor afford the slightest satisfaction, if my own mind told me I had been resorting, directly or indirectly, to any such expedients as those to which I have referred.”

“Well, then, we will say no more on the subject,” remarked Joseph. “Of course you have seen Mr. Calderwood’s new work.”

“I have.”

“And read it through?”

“And read it through.”

“As he has been in the habit of attacking and calumniating you as a literary man for several years past, the publication of a book of his will afford you an excellent opportunity of retaliating. Send me a review of his work, and apply the tomahawk to himself and his book without mercy. I will insert anything you send, however severe.”

“That I cannot and will not do,” replied Mr. Lovegood. “Were I to treat Mr. Calderwood in the way you suggest, it would only be practising myself the very thing which you, and I, and others, have condemned in him.”

“But he is the aggressor. You would only be returning the blow which he has already struck.”

“That consideration would not alter the justice of the case. No provocation, however great, will ever justify a man in doing what

is morally wrong. My rule throughout my literary life has been, to endeavour to divest my mind of all prejudices and of all vindictive feelings, when having occasion, either in society or through the press, to speak of the works of those who have been in the habit of attacking myself or loading my books with abuse. To that line of literary conduct I shall, I trust, adhere to the last. Had I been disposed to act on a contrary principle, I could, in innumerable instances, have retaliated with no inconsiderable effect (without the parties themselves ever discovering who was their assailant) on authors who have been the most virulent and most frequent in their attacks on my productions. It is to me the source of a proud satisfaction, that in no one instance have I allowed any personal dislikes, any sense of injustice done to myself, to influence my criticisms of the works of others. If, indeed, I have had any feeling either way, it has been that of erring on the other side; in other words, of speaking more

favourably of their works than they really deserved. And of this I feel assured, that the frame of mind which dictates such a course, is immeasurably happier than that which prompts a reviewer to treat an author and his work with virulent abuse. An ill-natured critic is necessarily a miserable man: it is needless to add, that the converse of the proposition is equally true. The good-natured and generous-minded man is necessarily happy. Were our cynical critics aware of this truth, they would covet a kindly disposition and generosity of feeling from considerations of pure selfishness. There is a physiognomy in print as well as in the human countenance. The only wonder is, that some second Lavater has not, before now, specially directed the attention of the public to the fact. An appeal may safely be made to those who know, in the private walks of life, the leading critics of the day, whether their temper and disposition be not, at home and in the social circle, fairly set forth by their criticisms in the

public journals. The sour, the surly, and the malignant reviewer will almost invariably be found exhibiting the same unamiable qualities in the relations of private life; while the kindly and generous-minded critic, in newspapers and periodicals, will, with remarkably few exceptions, be found to be amiable and generous in the bosom of his family, and in all his intercourse with society."

CHAPTER XVI.

Joseph is taken seriously ill—Neglect of his acquaintances—
Ingratitude—Conversation with Mr. Lovegood on the argu-
ments in favour of and against Christianity.

THREE months after the date of the conversation between him and Mr. Lovegood, recorded in the last chapter, Joseph was taken seriously ill; so seriously, indeed, that, for five weeks of the period during which he was confined to his bed, his life was deemed, by the medical gentleman who attended him, to be in imminent danger. He was, in some respects, a man of very sensitive feelings; and the malady with which he had been seized was considerably aggravated by the circumstance of none—no, not one—of his boon companions, or hotel acquaintances, calling to inquire for him, after the first fortnight

of his illness. When first confined to his bed, some of them did make a formal call to inquire how he was; but ten or twelve days sufficed to test the quality and strength of their friendship. After the lapse of that brief period, they not only ceased to call on, but even to *think* of, him. He was scarcely any more remembered by them, than if such a person as Joseph Jenkins had never existed.

And so it will generally be found. Those friendships—if so they ought to be called—which are formed of no better materials than those which are supplied by a similarity of convivial tastes, and of loose practices in the ordinary walks of life, are, indeed, but rarely to be depended on. They lack cordiality or strength while they last, and are always liable to be snapt asunder by the slightest breath of adversity.

Most poignantly did the mind of Joseph feel the desertion of those with whom he had spent so many hours of his life since his settlement in

London; with whom, indeed, was spent almost every fragment of his time not required in the discharge of his professional duties. What aggravated the bitterness of his disappointment was the fact, that he had been of considerable service to some of their number, not merely by forwarding their views, but by repeatedly assisting them with small loans of money. He consequently felt, that he had claims not only on their friendship, but on their gratitude; and to neglect him entirely—to suffer him to languish on his bed, or spend his tedious hours alone in his apartment, without once calling to stay an hour with him, or even to inquire for him, was the return which they made.

The philosophers of ancient Greece and Rome regarded ingratitude as one of the worst crimes which could be committed; and, in accordance with this conviction, they laid down the position, that those who were guilty of it deserved a double punishment. A more unamiable state of mind than that evinced by the

ungrateful man, it would be impossible to conceive. And yet it is to be feared, that this state of feeling, so abhorrent to every well-regulated mind, prevails to a fearful extent at the present time. Do we not witness it every day of our lives? Do we not, indeed, experience it every hour of our existence? Nor does the unsightly evil end even here. Who that has experienced aught of human life—who that has sought, from the purest, and holiest, and most disinterested motives, to avert a threatened calamity, or to remove an evil which had already overtaken and threatened to crush some acquaintance—has not, when success had crowned his generous exertions, found that, instead of being rewarded with the love and gratitude of him he had served, perhaps saved, been treated with a coldness and neglect he had never witnessed before? Nor is this all. To perform to some men acts of the purest friendship which one human being ever performed to another, is often, indeed, to incur the posi-

tive enmity of the very party you have placed under the deepest obligations. Oh! it does make the heart sick, and the spirit sink, when one meets with such a return for deeds of kindness and friendship which his own conscience tells him were performed from motives of the most generous kind; from motives as pure, we had almost said, as ever existed even in the breasts of angels themselves.

The Greeks and the Romans were right in regarding ingratitude as one of the most ignoble acts of which a man could be guilty. It entails the deepest degradation on human nature; and inspires in every virtuously-constituted mind, a feeling of shame for one's species. Pity that it is so common. It is to be hourly met with. Go where one will, it is sure to cross his path. Ingratitude has slain its thousands. Many a noble heart has been broken by its constant reflections on the utter neglect of those on whose attention and friendship the victim had claims of the most powerful kind.

The bosom of many a reader will respond to the justice of the remark, when I say that, to confer an essential service on an acquaintance is (as has just been remarked) often the sure way to forfeit his friendship and put an end to the intimacy which previously existed. And in proportion to the importance of the service rendered, is often the desire of the party served to have no farther intercourse—or, at any rate, as little as possible—with him who has conferred the obligation. Such individuals are guilty of conduct which is not only in the highest degree unworthy in itself, but is productive of the worst results to society; for persons who are constitutionally of a generous mind, and in whose bosoms nature has implanted feelings of friendship for their fellow-men, are forced to the conclusion, by the instances of ingratitude with which they meet, that the surest way to cause an acquaintance to demean himself with coldness, if not to put an end altogether to the previously existing intimacy, is to render

him the greatest service which it is in your power to perform. And when once such a conclusion as this has forced itself on the mind, what wonder if it extinguish all the charities and kindness which before glowed in one's heart, and restrain his hand for the future from serving those who may stand in need of his assistance?

Such were some of the considerations which occupied Joseph's mind. Most acutely (as before remarked) did he feel the neglect of those who were formerly his constant associates in the hours set apart to convivial indulgences. Their neglect was heightened by contrast. Mr. Lovegood, the moment he heard of his illness, hurried to his bedside; and seldom did a day pass without the presence of that gentleman, for a longer or shorter period, in his sick chamber. What chiefly occupies our mind, is usually that on which we are most ready to speak. Joseph had scarcely thought, for some weeks past, of anything but the indifference to the issue of his ill-

ness, which his acquaintances had manifested; and, having no one else but Mr. Lovegood to whom he could unbosom himself, he made some pointed observations to him on the subject.

“ I do not at all wonder at the circumstance,” remarked the latter.

Joseph looked surprised on hearing the observation.

“ I see you wonder at the remark.”

“ I confess I do; because I had formed a better opinion of human nature.”

“ I fear,” replied Mr. Lovegood, “ your opinion of human nature in its unregenerate state, has been more favourable than facts would warrant.”

“ I admit it has been, so far as my former associates are concerned.”

“ A little more experience of the world would have led you to give a more extended application to the remark.”

“ I hope not; charity would lead me to believe that my late acquaintances—for, should I

be fortunate enough to recover, they will be my acquaintances no more—must be among the most unfavourable specimens of our species which are to be met with.”

“ In that you are mistaken,” remarked Mr. Lovegood. “ I do not say that there can be no friendship among men whose minds are unrenewed by a supernatural influence—for I have known instances in which there has been ; but I do maintain, as the result of a very extensive acquaintance with the world, that such instances are exceedingly rare. Should you, in the event of your recovery, persist in forming your intimacies with unsanctified men, you will be again doomed to realize, in all the bitterness of experience, the truth of my statement.”

Joseph was silent.

“ May I be permitted, in the spirit of genuine kindness, to ask a question ? ” inquired Mr. Lovegood.

“ Certainly, by all means,” answered Joseph.

“ Well, then, do you view matters—and,

above all, religious matters—in the same light as you did when in perfect health, and in your moments of hilarity among your former associates?”

“ I view things differently to this extent, that I am alive to the hollowness of seeming friendship, which I once thought real. Had not experience taught me, had I not been confined to a sick chamber, I could never have believed that acquaintances on whom I had lavished unnumbered acts of kindness, could have as entirely deserted me as if I had been suddenly transformed into some object too hideous to be seen.”

“ My question,” observed Mr. Lovegood, “ did not point to the ingratitude and neglect of your former companions ; it had reference to your views on religious topics.”

Joseph returned no answer.

“ I should be sorry,” pursued the other, “ to press upon you a subject on which you are unwilling to converse ; but you will admit, whatever view you take of it, that it is the most

momentous question which ever occupied the thoughts of man."

Joseph assented.

"And I have generally found, that however much persons may be indisposed to entertain the subject when in the enjoyment of health, and when borne along on the tide of prosperity, their minds are accessible to reason and their judgments to conviction, when stretched on a bed of sickness."

Joseph was silent.

"I am sure," continued Mr. Lovegood, "that, apart from the truth or falsehood of Christianity, you are satisfied, that it is a system far more suited to a person in your circumstances, than the infidel or sceptical creed which you have unhappily embraced."

"I admit it. That conviction is *now* most deeply impressed on my mind. I am a stranger to the joys inspired by a firm faith in that blessed immortality which the Gospel professes to unfold. I am a slave, do what I may, to fears

and apprehensions regarding a future state. Still I cannot satisfy myself that Christianity is true."

"Do you not think," suggested Mr. Lovegood, "that your practice may have something to do with your principles?"

"I do not," replied Joseph, "very clearly see how it can. I can easily understand in what way a man's creed may influence his conduct; but I cannot so easily comprehend how a man's conduct can influence or control his creed."

"To me the thing is plain. Have you never felt your conscience reproving you for certain actions you have performed? And, when thus condemned by that inward monitor, have you not felt a wish arising in your bosom, that no punishment were annexed to particular moral crimes; and, as Christianity *does* annex fearful penalties to all such offences, have you not felt a wish that Christianity itself were not true?"

"I must own," replied Joseph, "that I have felt a process, similar to what you describe, going on in my mind."

“ Then you cannot fail to perceive, that your conduct influences your creed. You must be aware, that when you thus once *wish*, because it is for your interest, that a certain class of opinions were not true, you are already half-way towards the rejection of them ; the remainder of the distance is trodden with an incredible rapidity. Depend on it, my dear friend, that were men’s lives more correct in a moral point of view—were they less at variance with the spirit and precepts of the Christian system, that system would be much more generally embraced than it is.”

“ I confess,” said Joseph, “ that I do sometimes wish I could bring myself to believe in revelation ; but I cannot.”

“ What is the principal obstacle that lies in the way of your reception of the Christian system ?”

“ I can scarcely tell ; unless it be an impression, of which I cannot rid myself, that, after man ceases to exist on earth, he ceases to exist at all.”

“The man who can abandon himself to so gloomy a belief, is assuredly to be pitied. His must indeed be a desolate bosom. To me it has always appeared unaccountable, that any one who rejects the idea of a future state—who believes that contemporaneously with the death of the body is the annihilation of the spirit, can reconcile himself to existence at all. Why should he bear up under the ills of life, when self-destruction is an infallible specific for them all? Why endure even a twinge of the toothache, when he has it in his power, at any moment he chooses, to put an end to pain entirely and for ever?”

“I can only,” replied Joseph, “account for the tenacity with which those of us cling to life who have no belief in a future state, by an undefinable instinct which nature has implanted in our breasts, and which never leaves us so long as existence lasts.”

“The attachment to life amidst all its troubles and trials, which those who entertain your

views exhibit, is, to say the least of it, anomalous and inconsistent," said Mr. Lovegood.

"I admit that it is," replied Joseph; "but is not life itself made up of a mass of inconsistencies?"

"It is, certainly, on *your* principles, but not on those of Christianity. Revelation reconciles the various seeming discrepancies which we meet with in the world; it clears up all mysteries; makes darkness light and crooked things straight."

"*If* one could only believe in its truth," remarked Joseph, with significant emphasis.

"And why not? Others have done so: they do so still. Many, indeed a large majority of the most illustrious men in every country and every age, since the death of its Founder, have cordially embraced Christianity. Where shall we find in the ranks of the rejectors of revelation, names as distinguished as those of Bacon, Locke, Milton, Boyle, Newton, and others that could be named? And if such individuals could

make an unreserved surrender of their judgments to the truth of the Christian scheme, there surely can exist no moral necessity why you should not also embrace the Christian system. You are not, I am sure, vain enough to suppose that your judgment and your capacity for sifting and weighing evidence, are superior to what theirs were."

"You only," replied Joseph, "do me justice in acquitting me of any such vanity. But still, if I cannot yield the assent of my understanding to certain moral or religious propositions, I cannot help it. The mind is not to be forced: persecution may achieve a seeming conviction, it may extort a lip admission that the mind concurs in views which it formerly repudiated, but persecution cannot influence or control the mind."

"But have you, allow me to ask, honestly and perseveringly sought to arrive at the truth in this momentous matter? Have you not come too hastily to your present opinion? Have you

not too suddenly arrived at the conclusion that Christianity is not true ?”

“ I have read a great deal, and thought still more on the subject.”

“ On both sides of the question ? ”

“ On both sides of the question.”

“ And *equally* on both sides ? ”

“ I am not sure that I could, with a strict regard to truth, say that I have read as much on the evidences of the truth of revelation as I have on the arguments which have been urged against it.”

“ Then you are not a competent judge ; you have no right to come to a conclusion on the subject ; certainly not, at any rate, to an adverse conclusion. Your case is that of almost every unbeliever : infidels greedily devour whatever is written against Christianity, and as studiously omit the perusal of the masterly treatises written in its favour.”

Joseph felt that the observation was strictly applicable to him, and therefore was silent.

“But, my dear friend,” resumed Mr. Lovegood, “I do not say this with the view of wounding your feelings. I make the remarks you have heard in the hope of convincing you that you have not acted with the integrity required on a question of such unspeakable importance, and, consequently, of more fully opening your mind to the reception of evidence. But permit me to make one or two observations on your statement, that you have, somehow or other, arrived at the conclusion, that after death man ceases to exist altogether, and consequently is no longer susceptible of pleasure or pain, of happiness or misery.”

“A strong impression to that effect, to say the least of it, has taken possession of my mind.”

“I can deeply sympathize with you, because that very idea did for a season, before I cordially embraced Christianity—for there was a period in my life, when, without absolutely rejecting revelation, I was not entirely con-

vinced of its truth—often intrude on my mind. But the moment I became thoroughly persuaded that the Bible constitutes a revelation from Heaven, that moment all scepticism or misgivings as to the truth of any doctrine it contains, vanished away. I then became a settled and firm believer not only in the doctrine of a future state, but in that of rewards and punishments according to the deeds done in the body. You, however, have not yet been able to yield your assent to the truth of the Scriptures, and, consequently, you must be reasoned with on the principles of philosophy only. Well, then, you admit that you do exist.”

“Certainly ; that is a proposition regarding which there can be no scepticism. It is one of the few truths in which all are agreed. Descartes, in the plenitude of his anxiety to make men sceptical on all points, advised them to begin by doubting their own existence. His advice, however, was of a nature that no one

could take: he could not take it himself. He must indeed have a wonderful capacity for doubting, who could doubt his own existence."

"And, I presume," resumed Mr. Lovegood, "that, as you admit your existence, you will also admit with equal readiness, that you have been created or made."

"The latter proposition is as undeniable as the former."

"Nor will you hesitate to acknowledge that you did not make or create yourself."

"Such a supposition would be the very essence of absurdity. It would involve a contradiction."

"You must have been called into being by some Power superior to, and altogether independent of, yourself."

"Undoubtedly; there can be no question on that point."

"Well, then, since you thus admit your existence, and that you did not create or make yourself, but that you were created or made by

some other Power, does it not, so far from appearing unreasonable, appear exceedingly probable, that the same Power which gave you an existence here, will confer on you an existence hereafter; or, to speak more in accordance with the light of Christianity, continue in a future state the existence you now enjoy?"

"But," suggested Joseph, "all our notions of a future state imply not only a difference of being, but an existence in a different sphere; and these circumstances increase the difficulty of believing in a future state."

"They ought," replied Mr. Lovegood, "to have no such effect; assuredly they have no such necessary tendency. Just only assume for a moment, that the child in the maternal womb had the reasoning power as fully developed as persons of mature age, instead of being in an exceedingly imperfect state—if, indeed, it can be said to exist at all;—and that, by some process or other of communicating knowledge with which we are un-

acquainted, the unborn child were informed that, after the lapse of a few weeks or months, it would be ushered into an entirely new world, and, instead of being confined to the limited space of its mother's womb, where it could hear no sound and see no object, it would, after the expiration of a certain period, roam at pleasure among new and illimitable regions, in which, above, there would be a sun, a moon, and stars innumerable, while the earth on which it trod would present landscapes of surpassing loveliness: just only suppose that it were possible to communicate information of this nature to the child in its mother's womb, and that it possessed the requisite intelligence to comprehend its purport; only, I repeat, suppose all this, and then say, whether the changes which the infant would, in that case, undergo between any period previous to its birth and its reaching the age of ten or twelve, or whether the change in its sphere as the tenant of the womb and the full-grown inhabitant of this earth,

would not be almost, if not altogether, as great as those which the Scriptures point out as necessary to be undergone by all men after death. And if the event shows that the conclusion of the unborn child, supposing it capable of coming to conclusions—that it would never have any other mode or sphere of existence than it then has, is altogether erroneous, have we not the strongest presumptive grounds for believing, putting out of view the testimony of revelation on the subject, that there are another state and sphere of existence beyond the confines of the present life?”

Joseph listened with evident attention to the argument of his friend, but said it failed to carry conviction to his mind.

Mr. Lovegood replied, that he was sorry to hear it, but expressed a hope that, by pursuing the line of reasoning and illustration which the few observations he had made had only opened, the result would eventually be his belief in a future state. “Will you,” he added, “bear

with me while I make one or two more remarks?"

"Oh, certainly," rejoined Joseph. "He must, indeed, have but little faith in his creed who is afraid to listen to any observations having for their object to show that it is untenable."

"Well, then, I shall, for the moment, put Christianity wholly out of the question, and state my position thus:—Either there must be no God, or there must be a future state of being in which the virtuous shall be rewarded and the wicked punished. I shall enter into no elaborate arguments to prove the existence of a Supreme Being—that is the province of the professed theologian; neither, even were I competent to the task, would this be the proper occasion. Ours being merely an accidental conversation, I shall content myself with a few general observations. There is something in every virtuous breast which leads one inevitably and utterly to revolt from the awful doctrine, that there is no God. I should like to have a faithful

description of the thoughts, and feelings, and operations of that mind which has reached the astounding hardihood of excluding the Deity from the universe. How dark, and desolate, and wretched, must be the bosom of the man who has attained the fearful climax of audacity necessarily involved in the denial of the existence of a God! No Supreme Being to punish him for his crimes! Why, then, hesitate for a single instant to commit any action, no matter how atrocious the light in which society may regard it, for which the law will not punish him? No Almighty to reward him for his virtues! Why, then, perform acts of benevolence and mercy for which society will not recompense him? If there be no Supreme Being, then let mankind apostrophise the principle of evil as did Milton's fallen angel—'Evil, be thou my good;' that is to say, injure, and plunder, and rob your fellow-men, to the greatest possible extent, no matter what the amount of misery you inflict on them, if it only

administer to your own gratification, without incurring the risk of legal consequences. Atheists tell us that the existence of a God has never been satisfactorily proved. The evidence, I admit, is not of that class which comes under the designation of mathematical demonstration; but it is of the most conclusive kind of which a moral truth can be conceived susceptible. Creation and Providence, everything above, below, about, and within us, proclaim aloud that there is a God; and I do not believe the human being ever existed, who had not, at one time or other of his life, overwhelming convictions in his own breast of the existence of a Supreme Being. Is there to be found a man among those who have embraced the principles of atheism, who can lay his hand on his heart and say, that a belief in the existence of a God has never forced itself on his mind? No such man is to be found. Atheists demand of their opponents proofs of the existence of the Deity, which shall be as conclusive as those which

demonstrate a mathematical proposition. The demand is unreasonable. I speak with all reverence, but I speak advisedly, when I say that, constituted as man now is, the Supreme Being could not, consistently with his own character and revealed purposes, furnish the desired proofs. Man while here is in a state of probation. Even atheists will, in a modified sense, admit the truth of this proposition; they will admit that man is surrounded by circumstances which test his moral character, and which have visible bearings on his conduct. If the Deity were to furnish mankind with the proofs of his own existence which atheists demand, then man's faith in the being of a God would become inevitable; it would be a matter of absolute necessity; and he would consequently cease to be in a probationary state in reference to that first and most essential principle of all religion. But can atheists furnish us with that class of evidence for the non-existence of a God, which they demand of us in proof of

his existence? Unless they can, they have no right to demand it of us. So far from this, they cannot furnish us with anything worthy of the name of even moral evidence in support of their proposition, that there is no God. They content themselves with mere assertions on the subject. They endeavour to dogmatise and ridicule men out of all belief in a Divine Being, but they do not—at any rate, not so far as I am aware—advance anything bearing the semblance of argument in support of their position. There is something awfully daring and presumptuous in coming to the conclusion, that there is no God. That conclusion actually involves, on the part of the misguided individual who arrives at it, an assumption of the very qualities in his own person which he denies to the Being whom the believers in revealed religion—ay, and even deists too, regard as God. In other words, the denial of the existence of the Deity is a virtual arrogation, by the person making it,

of the very attributes which constitute Deity. On this point I would earnestly commend to the serious attention of atheists, the following passage from Foster's 'Essays on Decision of Character,' which is, perhaps, one of the most striking passages within the whole range of English literature. Mr. Foster proves, with the clearness of demonstration, that it is impossible, whatever men may pretend, that they can, with the slightest regard to even the semblance of reasoning, come to the conclusion that there is no God. He shows, that the very fact, supposing it possible, of a man excluding a Supreme Being from the universe, actually involves his assumed possession of the very attributes which constitute the essence of a God. The passage, when I first met with it, struck me as one of such singular force, that I committed it to memory. It is as follows:—

“‘I will imagine,’ says that wonderful man, ‘only one case more, on which you would em-

phatically express your compassion, though for one of the most daring beings in the creation, a *contemner of God*, who explodes his law by denying his existence.

“ ‘ If you were so unacquainted with mankind, that this character might be announced to you as a rare or singular phenomenon, your conjectures, till you saw and heard the man, at the nature and extent of the discipline through which he must have advanced, would be led towards something extraordinary. And you might think that the term of that discipline must have been very long; since a quick train of impressions, a short series of mental gradations, within the little space of a few months and years, would not seem enough to have matured such an awful heroism. Surely that creature that thus lifts his voice, and defies all invisible Power within the possibilities of infinity, challenging whatever unknown Being may hear him, and may appropriate that title of Almighty which is pronounced in scorn, to

evince his existence, if he will, by his vengeance, was not as yesterday a little child, that would tremble and cry at the approach of a diminutive reptile.

“ ‘ But indeed it is heroism no longer, if he *knows* that there is no God. The wonder, then, turns on the great process, by which a man could grow to the immense intelligence that can know that there is no God. What ages and what lights are requisite for THIS attainment! This intelligence involves the very attributes of Divinity, while a God is denied: for unless this man is omnipresent, unless he is at this moment in every place in the universe, he cannot know but there may be in some place manifestations of a Deity by which even *he* would be overpowered. If he does not know absolutely every agent in the universe, the one that he does not know may be God. If he is not himself the chief agent in the universe, and does not know what is so, that which is so may be God. If he is not in absolute possession of all

the propositions that constitute universal truth, the one which he wants may be, that there is a God. If he cannot with certainty assign the cause of all that he perceives to exist, that cause may be a God. If he does not know everything that has been done in the immeasurable ages that are past, some things may have been done by a God. Thus, unless he knows all things—that is, precludes another Deity by being one himself, he cannot know that the Being whose existence he rejects does not exist. But he must *know* that he does not exist, else he deserves equal contempt and compassion for the temerity with which he firmly avows his rejection, and acts accordingly. And yet a man of ordinary age and intelligence may present himself to you with the avowal of being thus distinguished from the crowd; and if he would describe the manner in which he has attained this eminence, you would feel a melancholy interest in contemplating that process, of which the result is so portentous.'

“Is not the passage a very remarkable one?” said Mr. Lovegood, when he had finished its rehearsal.

“It is, unquestionably, very original and very striking. Every one must admit, that it is a powerful passage, even should he doubt the conclusiveness of its reasoning.”

“All I shall say on that point,” remarked Mr. Lovegood, is this:—I should like to see those who dissent from its conclusions, attempt an exposure of the fallacy which they fancy they have discovered in them. Just let them shut themselves up for one short hour in unbroken solitude, and make the attempt. If they only do this; if they but reflect upon it calmly and fully; if they bestow on it a careful and candid consideration, I trust the event will prove, that I am not over-sanguine in anticipating that it will, through the blessing of that very Being whose existence they have hitherto denied, be the means of rescuing some of them from that fearful gulph of atheism into which they have

plunged themselves, and establishing them in the firm faith of the existence of a Creator, a Preserver, and a moral Governor of the universe. It were far more rational and far better, even as regards the individual's own present happiness, to believe, as Lord Bacon says, in all the absurdities of the Talmud, than to deny the existence of a God : it were infinitely more reasonable and more consolatory to a rightly constituted mind, to believe in the countless inanimate deities of the heathen, than to believe in no Deity at all. Atheists make large pretensions to philosophy : give me, in preference to their creed, the philosophy which obtains in the darkest and most barbarous regions of Africa ; for even there the mind of the poor untutored savage ' sees God in clouds, and hears him in the winds.' But," continued Mr. Lovegood, after a brief pause, " I shall suppose the existence of a God to be conceded. Well, then, if a Supreme Being exists, I hold that a future state of rewards and punish-

ments follows as a necessary consequence. Here, again, I would purposely abstain from anything metaphysical. I put my argument on this plain intelligible ground:—We can form no conception of a Deity, without investing him with the attributes of omniscience, almighty power, spotless purity, and perfect justice. He must have each and all of these. He must have the power equally to punish the bad and reward the good. Guilt, being so opposed to his own nature, must be the subject of his deep displeasure; while goodness, being a transcript of his image, must be viewed by him with unspeakable satisfaction. Whatever he thus knows to be deserving of punishment, and what he knows to be deserving of reward, the justice of his character calls on his almighty power to punish and to reward. But, in the present life, it is palpable to all—indeed it has never been denied—that the worst and most profligate of men often entirely escape punishment; while it is equally true, and equally admitted, that the

most virtuous of mankind frequently live and die in wretchedness; not only never enjoying the rewards of virtue, but treated with the grossest injustice and the greatest unkindness by their fellow-men. The conviction, therefore, is irresistible, that there must be a future state in which these seeming anomalies in the moral government of God shall all be explained and reconciled, by the rewards which will be bestowed on the righteous, and the punishments which will be inflicted on the guilty. This," continued Mr. Lovegood, "appears to me an unanswerable, though simple, mode of arguing the existence of a future state of rewards and punishments; and I cannot divest my mind of the powerful conviction, that there are moments in the life of every professed infidel, who has not sought refuge in the gloom and horrors of absolute atheism, in which the force of the argument does commend itself to his judgment."

Joseph made no attempt at reply; he merely

remarked, that the subject was one on which there was no positive certainty, because there was no mathematical proof on either side.

“ Well, then,” remarked Mr. Lovegood, “ I am willing to put the matter on that footing. I am willing to concede to you the truth of your own proposition. I am willing, for the moment, to concur with you, that there is no absolute certainty on the point. Viewing, then, the subject in that light, does, let me ask you, the unbeliever or the Christian stand in the safer position? I will go still farther. I will even, for the sake of argument, admit, if you wish it, that the proposition, that Christianity has no pretensions to the character of a divine revelation, is susceptible of demonstration. What then? What does the deluded believer in its truth lose by his faith in it? If there be no hereafter, he cannot, of course, lose anything in a future state from his credulity in this world. And you will hardly, in the face of all testimony and observation, venture to assert, that

the Christian loses by his religion in this life. The delusion he is, for the moment, assumed to cherish, is, necessarily, a delightful delusion. Dr. Johnson says, that half the happiness of this life is derived from hopes which are not destined to be ever realized. What, then, must be the measure of happiness which the believer derives from the glorious hopes which he so fondly cherishes? If hopes which only embrace objects which are finite, fleeting, and necessarily limited to the duration of human life, be productive of so much happiness to the bosom in which they have been engendered and are fostered—what, oh! what must be the amount and quality of that bliss which is produced by the vigorous exercise of an assured hope of realizing in another world, objects of infinite, immutable, and imperishable good? Then, again, as regards the Christian's conduct in the various relations of life, does his belief in revelation make him a worse member of society; a worse husband, father, master, servant, subject,

or citizen, than he would be were he to reject Christianity, and adopt the opposite system of faith? That will not be pretended: it never has been pretended. Bolingbroke, Hume, Rousseau, and almost every infidel of note, have all, on the contrary, been candid enough to admit, that Christianity not only contributes largely to the happiness of those who embrace it, but that it makes them, at the same time, better members of society. And I am much mistaken, Mr. Jenkins, if your candour will not prompt you to make a similar admission."

"I do admit it," replied Joseph, with considerable emphasis.

"I expected as much," remarked Mr. Lovegood. "But," he continued, "if Christianity should be true; if there be a future state in which virtue shall be rewarded and vice punished, how unutterably awful the alternative to the infidel!—how terrible his doom!—how indescribably fearful his destiny! The error is

irremediable ; its consequences are eternal. Ah, my friend, just only devote a few hours of your present seclusion from society, to the consideration of the world of import there is in that little word ‘*if*.’ *If* Christianity be true ; *if* there be a future state ; *if* there be a Supreme Being, who will hereafter reward every man according to his deeds, what will become of those who reject divine revelation ; or, in the more emphatic language of the Scripture, where will the ungodly and the sinner appear ? But, I fear,” said Mr. Lovegood, in conclusion, “ I only weary you.”

“ Oh, no ; certainly not,” replied Joseph. “ The subject, whatever view may be taken of it, is, unquestionably, worthy of the gravest consideration.”

“ I shall be exceedingly happy,” remarked Mr. Lovegood, “ if anything I have said may have the effect of leading you to reconsider your views on matters of such unspeakable importance. I shall call on you again in a few days,

when I hope to find you continuing to improve in health and strength. In the meantime I shall wish you good night."

"Good night, and I am exceedingly obliged to you for your visit," said Joseph, extending his hand to Mr. Lovegood, who, after having cordially shaken it, quitted the room.

CHAPTER XVII.

Is restored to health—Effect of the conversation with Mr. Lovegood described in the last chapter—Visits Hastings.

JOSEPH continued to recover gradually from his severe and protracted illness ; and, in four weeks from the time of Mr. Lovegood's visit recorded in the preceding chapter, his health was so far restored that he was able to quit his room. In a fortnight more he felt himself sufficiently recovered to resume his professional avocations as a reporter and a literary man.

For some days after the conversation which he had had with Mr. Lovegood, on the importance and truth of the Christian system, Joseph felt a decided conviction that the arguments of his friend in favour of the being of a God and the existence of a future state of rewards and

punishments, were unanswerable. The result was, that his mind suddenly acquired a peculiarly solemn tone, and he resolved on regulating his after life by the light which had so recently beamed on his mind. As yet, however, he had not learned the necessity of aid from on high to carry out any virtuous resolutions he might form. He made his resolves on this point in the same way as he would have done, had he simply intended to visit St. Paul's, or any place of public amusement. The result was the same as in every other similar case, it only proved the futility and folly, as well as sinfulness, of religious resolutions formed in one's own strength. No sooner was Joseph once more in a condition to mingle in society, and to resume his usual avocations, than he returned to his former libertine course of conduct.

But though, practically, no good result followed from the conversation he had had with Mr. Lovegood on the truth of revealed religion, the

force of the arguments employed by the latter still remained undiminished on his mind. In this there is nothing surprising to those who have studied the philosophy of human nature, either as unfolded in Scripture or as seen in the ordinary intercourse of life. Every hour's observation brings before the mind the most striking illustrations of the truth, that it is possible for the judgment to be fully convinced on matters of religion, while the heart remains wholly unaffected. One cannot be an attentive observer of the characters of those with whom he daily meets in society, without being struck with the vast number of persons who are not only convinced in their judgments of the truth of Christianity, but who will zealously, and sometimes even ably, vindicate its claims to the character of a divine revelation, and yet whose whole conduct proves to demonstration that they have never felt in their hearts the power of those principles which have challenged the assent of their minds. Christendom abounds,

and no portion of it more largely than the land we live in, with individuals who are speculative Christians, but practical infidels—men whose judgments do homage to revealed truth, but whose hearts have never embraced it, and whose conduct is, in consequence, altogether uninfluenced by it. This is what the Scripture so emphatically calls a dead faith. Far better were it for such persons that they had never known the truth at all. The case of the man who is a speculative as well as practical infidel, is preferable to theirs. Among this class of men, Joseph Jenkins was now to be ranged. His judgment was right, but his heart and his life were, as heretofore, wholly wrong.

But though his speculative assent to the truth of Christianity was thus productive of no immediately practical results, in so far as his general conduct was concerned, the change which his creed had undergone was followed by one beneficial effect in reference to others. As a matter of course, he no longer sought to proselytise

to infidel views, those with whom he met in the ordinary relations of life. And this circumstance being soon observed by his more intimate acquaintances, led them to the conclusion that he had renounced his infidel views.

And I may be permitted to take this opportunity of expressing my surprise, how even the firm believer in infidelity—assuming that infidelity can have its firm believers—can, provided he be a philanthropist, take any pleasure in attempting to bring over others to the system which he has embraced. Infidelity never yet made, and never can make, an individual happy; but it invariably robs a man of the happiness he previously enjoyed. Even therefore, were I an unbeliever in Christianity, I should feel under an imperative obligation, from mere considerations of benevolence, to allow others to enjoy opinions which are so well adapted to afford present comfort in every emergency, by the bright and blessed halo which it throws around the future.

It has often struck my mind with a force to which no words can give adequate expression, that even supposing it to be a delusion, the universal impression that there are regions beyond the precincts of time and the limits of terrestrial space, in which all the disorders of the present state of things will be remedied, and all the wrongs of the world redressed, is one of the wisest and most merciful ordinations of the benevolent Power who has given us being. But for the hope of a happy hereafter, there are millions of our race to whom existence would be a burden too heavy to be borne. That glorious hope alone sustains them under the pressure of the toils and troubles of life. He, therefore, who seeks to rob his fellow-creatures of their faith in immortality, is the greatest enemy of his species, even supposing his own convictions in the non-existence of a future state are as strong as they are in the existence of the material world.

Joseph, with a view to the complete restora-

tion of his health, repaired for a fortnight to Hastings, as soon as he could make the necessary arrangements for leaving town. Hastings is a delightful place: it is one of the most respectable—because so select in the character of its visitors—of the many watering-places which are located along our English coast. The scenery around is the most beautiful and picturesque I have ever witnessed. The view of the sea is delightful, studded as it is with its numerous fishing-boats, with here and there a vessel of larger size enthroned on the bosom of the ocean, and riding with an aspect of dignity and triumph to its destined haven. But the great attraction of Hastings to those who, like myself, are enamoured of lovely landscapes, is the surpassing richness of the *terra firma* scenery in its immediate vicinity. When I first travelled from Hastings to Rye, a distance of about twelve miles, it was between seven and nine o'clock in the evening, in the month of July. The singular fineness of that evening

will never fade from my recollection. Not a breath of wind disturbed the stillness of the atmosphere. All was calm—perfectly calm. Nature seemed as if she had resolved to enjoy, at least for a little season, the luxury of a profound repose. It is no poetic flight of the fancy to say, that the sun seemed one vast globe of brilliant fire. Slowly yet majestically was that luminary descending towards the horizon, and rich beyond the power of expression was the yellow radiance which it poured on every object on earth's surface. At some parts of the road the view which the eye could command embraced an extent of many miles in all directions. And in the landscapes which thus lay at my feet, as I stood on the summit of one of the highest hills in that part of Sussex, there were a variety and picturesqueness to which I feel assured there are but few parallels in the world we inhabit. Hill and dale, wood and vale, the green sward and the heath-clad moor; extended rows of umbrageous trees intersecting

luxuriant fields of corn and grass; gentlemen's country seats, with their adjoining gardens and orchards; and last, though not least, the clean and cheerful cottages of the peasantry, which rose up in hundreds at short distances from each other—were among the objects which contributed to the surpassingly beautiful scenery on which my vision feasted itself. I had read of charming landscapes in that class of romances known by the name of fairy tales, but I felt how poor were the efforts of the imagination, when compared with the reality of the scenes which lay before me. No one could have looked on the landscapes which I then beheld, under such a concurrence of favourable circumstances, without recurring in his mind to what he has read in the records of inspiration, of what must have been the pleasures of our first parents, while yet in a state of innocence, in the Paradise which their Maker assigned them. I thought how beautiful and blessed it were possible for this world to become, were

moral and physical evil only exiled for ever from it.

Hastings, in addition to the respectability of those who visit it in the fashionable season, and the singular beauty of the surrounding scenery, possesses this other great source of attraction—that it is, with the single exception of the Isle of Wight, the most healthy place for invalids in any part of England. The climate is peculiarly mild, and the air remarkably salubrious. Hence it is that so many patients labouring under pulmonary complaints, are sent to Hastings by their medical advisers.

The place was full when Joseph Jenkins paid his visit to it. There he met with some literary acquaintances who had resorted thither with the same view as himself—namely, to enjoy a little relaxation at the seaside.

CHAPTER XVIII.

Joseph Jenkins attends, simply from motives of curiosity, a Socialist meeting held in the metropolis—The principles promulgated—Mr. Hatchet's speech—Its effects—A ludicrous incident.

JOSEPH, having spent his fortnight at Hastings, returned to town, considerably invigorated by the healthful seabreezes of that favourite watering-place. At the seaside, notwithstanding all the attractions of the place and the season, he had felt, for the last ten or twelve days, quite out of his element, and panted for the variety and excitement of metropolitan life. A certain amount of excitement was, indeed, necessary to his enjoyment of existence; nay, without something of a stirring kind, constituted

as his mind then was, life would have been barely tolerable. This eagerness for mingling in scenes of an exciting kind often induced him to attend public meetings, where he expected to witness amusing exhibitions of character, though such attendance was not at the time necessary for professional purposes. The first meeting which his curiosity prompted him to attend, on his return to town, was a meeting of the friends and admirers of Robert Owen, then in the height of his glory as the founder of the Social system. When Mr. Owen first developed his views in the metropolis, they were cordially and promptly embraced by large masses of the working classes. The father of the Socialist philosophy not only held out to the operatives the Elysian prospect of being abundantly fed and clothed, and comfortably housed, under the "new moral state of things," whose immediate advent it was his mission to harbinger—but this, too, without the necessity of labour, or, if there should be any work, it would only be

in the way of recreation; Mr. Owen, we say, not only inculcated these gratifying doctrines, but he was most zealous in his efforts to expose and banish from the world the egregious though popular error, that man is responsible to his Maker for his belief, and to society for his conduct. Mr. Owen boldly maintained, that men's opinions and actions are wholly the effects of the bad system of education under which children are brought up. He farther contended that, were his Socialist views of education adopted, there would not, before another generation had passed away, be a vicious man in the empire, but all would be perfectly virtuous. Mr. Owen was clear that society itself was the subject of the deepest blame, because it suffered a pernicious system of education to exist. But then the Social philosopher, in the plenitude of his charity, and on maturer consideration, acquitted society also of all blame; because it had itself, when its members were boys and girls at their parents' hearths, or in the public school,

been just as erroneously educated as those individuals whom it condemned and punished. Mr. Owen, therefore, preached up the delightful doctrine, that society itself ought not to be punished, nor had it any right to apply the lash to any miseducated man who had committed crimes against the old, worn-out, obsolete state of things which previously prevailed. In fact, there was to be no restraint; there were to be no checks, no punishments, no rewards of any kind, in the new state of things he came to bring about. Every man would have a right to do as he liked; the promptings of his own passions were to be the rule of his life; and, do what he pleased, nobody ought to blame him nor society to punish him for it. The most notorious and daring thief was quite as estimable a character as the most upright man, because his pilfering propensities and practices were the result of a vicious education: in other words, he was the creature of circumstances; he had no control over his actions.

The first promulgation of such doctrines as these was, as might have been expected, regarded by the vicious and worthless as a preliminary step to the introduction of a millennial state of things. There was unbounded exultation among the immense crowds of idlers, thieves, and profligate characters of all descriptions, who were present at each successive meeting held to further these new, these liberal, and enlightened views. The Old Bailey, Cold Bath Fields, and other well-known localities, would have been vocal with joy at the great discovery of Mr. Owen, had it not, unfortunately, been made rather late for the ladies and gentlemen residing in those places. No one will be surprised to learn that the new system made rapid progress. In a few weeks, Mr. Owen could boast of numbering among his attached disciples, all the felons, pickpockets, burglars, swindlers, and other reckless characters in London. He was the god of their idolatry. Their only regret was, that

the new system could not be brought into immediate operation.

It is needless to add, that Mr. Owen's admirers were too deeply interested in the success of his philosophy, not to do everything in their power to hasten the advent of the new era, which it was their object to usher in. As already remarked, Joseph Jenkins attended, merely for the gratification of his own curiosity, one of the meetings soon after his return to town. The meeting was held in a very large building near the farther end of Gray's Inn Road. It was crowded almost to suffocation; there were nearly 3000 disciples of the illustrious Socialist philosopher present, and there would have been double the number, had there been room for them. Mr. Owen himself, as a matter of course, presided on the occasion. He took the chair, as chairmen usually do, amidst loud cheers. He opened the meeting in a *suitable* speech; that is to say, a speech which was in perfect harmony with the principles of the new

system, which he represented himself as commissioned to propound. He took a cursory view of the differences which subsisted between the philosophy of his new moral world, and the absurd notions which obtained in the worn-out old world, of which it was their fate to be inhabitants. Having concluded his own oration, Mr. Owen announced that Mr. Graball would move the first resolution, and address the meeting. Mr. Graball did so, and acquitted himself to the satisfaction of all present. The resolution, which energetically denounced the unphilosophical system which had heretofore prevailed in the old world, and represented man as the creature of circumstances, was in the act of being put from the chair, having been duly seconded, when an intelligent-looking young man, in the body of the meeting, said that he wished, with the chairman's permission, to make a few observations before the resolution was put.

"Name, name," shouted a hundred voices at once.

"My name is Butler," answered the young man.

"Who are you, sir?" shouted about a dozen voices at once.

Before Mr. Butler could answer, a person possessing a more stentorian voice than any of the others, said, "Are you a Socialist?"

"No, I am not!" was the answer to the latter question.

"What are you then?" inquired a score of voices at once.

"I am a Christian," replied the young man, emphatically.

Groans, hisses, and cries of "Turn him out," burst from the multitude at the mention of the word Christian.

"I think we had better hear him," remarked Mr. Owen; "otherwise we shall not only be accused of a want of fair play, but we shall be represented as shrinking from the discussion of our principles."

Cries of "Go on," from a few voices, and silence from the rest of the auditory, followed the observation of the chairman.

Mr. Butler accordingly rose, and said, that the mover of the resolution had attempted to show, that man's character is partly the result of physical organization, and partly of the influence of the external circumstances by which he is surrounded, and that no two human beings possess a similar organization. "The doctrine," said Mr. Butler, "that man is the creature of circumstances, is at variance with all experience and observation. Not only do children who have been reared under the same roof, receiving the same care, tenderness, and education from the same parents, often exhibit the most marked dissimilarity of character and conduct; but even twins who have been brought up under *precisely the same* circumstances, eating and drinking at the same time and out of the same dish, sleeping in the same bed, and, in short, receiving the same mental, moral, and physical

education, are often found to be as unlike in temper, disposition, and conduct, as any two rational human beings could be supposed to be. This fact, then—a fact which must have been observed by every one who has paid the least attention to the subject—overthrows, at once and for ever, the Socialist theory so far as relates to the influence which the external circumstances by which man is surrounded, are said to have in the formation of his character. If aught else were needed to demonstrate the absurdity of that hypothesis, it would be found in a fact which is one that occurs in thousands of cases every Sabbath-day—that two persons go to the same place of worship in an unconverted state, and, after having heard the same sermon, the one comes away in precisely the same state of mind as he entered; while the other has experienced an entire change of mind, which will be accompanied by a thorough change of conduct during the remainder of his life. And yet were not the external circumstances by which each was

surrounded, while hearing the sermon, exactly the same?

“But I will not pursue the subject farther; nor is it necessary I should. Every man’s observation and experience must convince him, that the potent influence which the Socialists ascribe to the external circumstances by which mankind are surrounded, is monstrously exaggerated in the case of any man, and that, on many persons’ characters, they exert no perceptible influence at all. But then the Socialists may tell me that I overlook the important fact, that they partly ascribe the formation of man’s character to his physical organization. The phrase ‘physical organization,’ is one which I do not altogether understand. It sounds sufficiently well, but it is not so definite in its present application as could be desired. The Socialists, if I mistake them not, use it as but another name for the old doctrine of necessity. The Socialists are indeed necessitarians. Hence their doctrine of non-responsibility for men’s

actions, either to their fellow-men, or to any other intelligence, could they admit the existence of any other intelligence. In their eyes man is no better than a mere machine, moving only when propelled by circumstances. This position is also at issue with all observation and experience. We daily witness entire and enduring changes in human character, effected through the agency of revealed religion. We see the man whose breast was the abode of everything cruel and barbarous, become the wonder and admiration of all around him for his mildness, his benevolence, and humanity. The celebrated Howard, whose name will be ever hallowed wherever humanity asserts its rights in the bosom of man, is a remarkable case in point—not remarkable for the change undergone in his principles, feelings, dispositions, and conduct, but remarkable for the prominence with which his history shines out in the biographical literature of the land. Howard was not naturally nor

always the philanthropist which he proved himself to be during the latter part of his life. For many years after he had attained to man's estate, he was not only a stranger to those humane and benevolent feelings which, when embodied in action, in the after part of his career, filled the civilized world with his fame, but was remarkable for his indifference to the sufferings of his fellow-creatures. It was evangelical religion that softened his heart, humanized his mind, and wrought a total transformation in his character. Now, a Socialist, had such a person existed prior to Howard's conversion, would, at once, have attributed his indifference to human suffering, and other unamiable features in his character which I will not particularise, to his physical organization, in conjunction with the alleged influence of the external circumstances by which he was surrounded; while another Socialist, who chanced to become acquainted with him after his conversion, without knowing anything of his pre-

vious history, would, with equal confidence, have ascribed his sublime philanthropy, and all the other excellencies of his character, to the same causes—namely, physical organization, and the influence of the external circumstances by which he was surrounded. In other words, the Socialist before Howard's conversion would have traced all his vices, when a man of vicious character, to the causes in question; while the Socialist who knew him only after his character had undergone the wonderful transformation to which I have alluded, would have ascribed all his virtues to the conjoint operation of the same causes. What more need be said with the view of exposing the absurdity of the Social notions respecting the effect of physical organization, and the influence of the external circumstances by which mankind are surrounded? But I now"—

Mr. Butler, who had met with frequent interruptions in the course of his short address, was now assailed with a storm of hisses, yells, groans, &c., which rendered it impossible to

proceed. He repeatedly appealed to Mr. Owen to exercise his authority as chairman, and procure for him a patient hearing; assuring the father of Socialism that he would not occupy the time of the meeting two minutes longer. Mr. Owen, however, finding Mr. Butler's arguments to be rather awkward customers to deal with, took no notice of his appeals to him; and the consequence was, that he was literally clamoured down.

The resolution was then put, and carried without a single hand, with the exception of that of Mr. Butler, being held up against it. The applause was sufficiently prolonged to justify the chairman in sitting down until it should subside. Having sufficiently subsided, Mr. Owen again rose from the chair, and, with special emphasis, as if anticipating something very unusual in the way of a speech, announced to the meeting that "Brother" Hatchet would next address it.

Before referring to Mr. Hatchet's speech—

which, as will be afterwards seen, was *the* speech of the evening, it may be proper to remark, that this was his maiden effort as a public speaker; and that he had only recently been converted, by the personal exertions of Mr. Owen himself, to "the new views of society." He was an honest, industrious man; and, therefore, the father of Socialism, thinking that it would not be amiss, for the sake of appearances, to have a few persons of character among them, who would take a prominent part in their proceedings, was particularly anxious that he should move one of the resolutions at their next great meeting. Mr. Owen had accordingly, for several days, personally entreated Mr. Hatchet to move a resolution. The latter, at last, reluctantly consented. It was then agreed that he should move the second resolution, a copy of which was given him, in order that he might prepare an appropriate speech. Mr. Hatchet speedily prepared a speech to his own satisfaction; but he thought that, in order to

make his oratorical *debut* with the greater effect, a little harmless clap-trap at the commencement, might not be amiss. With that view, though not a rich man, and never evincing the slightest disposition to play the fop, he came to the determination to purchase a fine new cloak—it being the winter season—in whose ample folds his person might be enveloped while sitting on the platform, waiting his turn to address the meeting, and which might be gracefully laid aside when the chairman should announce his name, and he should have to rise to deliver himself of the load of eloquence lying so heavily on his mind.

Thus much being premised by way of explanatory observation, Mr. Hatchet, on the chairman announcing his name, rose from his seat, made a low bow to the meeting in return for the loud plaudits with which the mention of his name had been greeted, and, theatrically taking off his cloak, and placing it on the back of the chair he had just vacated, he proceeded to address the

meeting. "Mr. Chairman and Gentlemen," said Mr. Hatchet, "I utter, I assure you, the sentiments of my heart, when I say that never, in the whole course of my life, have I felt myself in a position of greater perplexity than I do at this moment. Unaccustomed, gentlemen, as I am to public speaking, I am borne down by an apprehension, that the resolution which I have been chosen—unworthily chosen—to propose, will not receive justice at my hands. (Cries of "No fear;" "No danger;" Go on, Hatchet," and so forth.) Most sincerely do I speak when I say, that I wish the moving of the resolution had been confided to some more competent man than I am (Cries of "No, no") to do it justice. The resolution, gentlemen, is as follows:—'That all the crimes which are committed in the world, are to be ascribed to the erroneous opinions which prevail on the subject of education; and that man is not responsible, and ought not to be punished by society, for his actions.'"

The cheers which followed the reading of the resolu-

tion, were cheers indeed. Accustomed as the ear of Joseph was to the plaudits with which popular propositions are received at public meetings, he had never before heard applause which could bear a moment's comparison with that which the reading of Mr. Hatchet's resolution drew forth from the vast assemblage. When the cheering had in some measure subsided, the mover proceeded to establish the positions contained in his resolution. Ably and eloquently did he argue, that education could mould the human character at will; and that, if all children were only properly trained, there would be no such thing as criminality of any kind in the world. The applause which this part of Mr. Hatchet's speech received, was not by any means so cordial or general as he, doubtless, anticipated. It was evident, that the great majority of his audience had no particular relish for the notion, that a time ever could come—at least they hoped it would not be in *their* time—when there would be no crime in the

world; for that seemed to imply, if they comprehended the matter aright, that a period was expected, or, at all events, *promised* by the Socialists, in which there should be no longer an appropriation of what did not belong to one's self; a contingency, which would be so unlike anything which had occurred in their past experience, that they could not bear to entertain the thought. When, however, Mr. Hatchet came to the consideration of the second part of his resolution, that, namely, wherein the great principle is so broadly laid down, that man is not blameable, nor ought to be held legally responsible, for his actions,—the applause with which every successive sentence was received must have more than compensated for any want of gratification visible during the delivery of the first part of his address. Never was public speaker known to make a deeper impression on his hearers. You saw conviction in every countenance, when Mr. Hatchet energetically descended on, and went through an elaborate

course of what he himself called ratiocinative reasoning, to prove the grand Social proposition, that man is not morally responsible, and ought not to be punished by the civil power, for his actions, however much they may militate against the best interests of society. Oh! the loudness and manifest cordiality of the applause which followed this part of Mr. Hatchet's speech! No one present could have before had the slightest idea of the capabilities of the human throat, when it has a sufficient motive to put all its powers into action. There is no extravagance, nothing hyperbolical, in what we say, when we assure our readers, that the plaudits uttered on this occasion by the vast assemblage, resembled so many peals of thunder. We are guilty of no figure of speech when we say, that Mr. Hatchet completely carried the sympathies of his hearers along with him in every word he spoke, in this part of his speech. If anything could have exceeded the effect with which he laid down and enforced his views, as to the non-

responsibility of man for his actions, and the consequent criminality of society in punishing him with imprisonment, hard labour, transportation beyond the seas, and the gallows itself, for conduct which he could not help,—it would have been the illustrations he gave of his positions. One of these was remarkable, not only for its singularly apposite nature, but for the noble disinterestedness of character on the part of the speaker, which it so forcibly displayed. “I do, gentlemen,” said Mr. Hatchet—and warm and energetic as he had been before, he waxed still warmer and more energetic when he came to this part of his oration—“I do, gentlemen, stand before you with all the boldness of a man who feels that he is giving utterance to a great and momentous truth when I say, that the consequences of the faulty system of education which prevails among us, are completely to confound all the distinctions between right and wrong; and, being so thoroughly persuaded of this, I must add, that I could not hold that per-

son to be a fit subject for blame or punishment, who robbed me of my property—of my own property, gentlemen.”

Here the audience rose in a body to their feet, just as if they had experienced some mesmeric agency. Not only was every throat vocal with the loudest hurrahs of which it was susceptible, but every hat in the place whirled in the air, and every foot was energetically applied to the floor. What was, perhaps, more remarkable still—at any rate it was the greatest triumph which Joseph Jenkins had ever seen achieved by oratory—the persons on the platform also simultaneously rose from their seats, and mingled their plaudits, the ruffling of their feet, the clapping of their hands, and the waving of their hats, with those of the vast assemblage in the body of the meeting.

Mr. Hatchet, as may well be supposed, was all this time in the zenith of his glory. Never had public speaker been so received before, on the delivery of his first address. While the

presence of you all, that knowing man's conduct to be entirely the effect of education, I shall always regard the thief with the same respect as I would the most honest man in the world." (Loud cries of "So will we.") Mr. Hatchet continued in the same strain, and to the entire satisfaction of his audience, till the close of his address, when he sat down with a renewed assurance of the infinite pleasure he experienced in moving the resolution.

Mr. Hatchet's resumption of his seat, was another signal for a renewed burst of applause. The plaudits he then received were as loud as the exhausted lungs and hoarse throats of his audience would admit of. The Socialists on the platform flocked around him like so many bees,—a regular struggle taking place among them as to who should first shake him by the hand, in token of their admiration of his speech.

"A most able, eloquent, and *convincing* speech," burst in chorus from the lips of all. Even the chairman himself, instead of first

announcing, as he ought to have done, the name of the seconder of the resolution, was so far carried away by the general feeling in favour of Mr. Hatchet's speech, as to shake him cordially by the hand, and audibly congratulate him on the triumphant manner in which he had demonstrated his positions. And the three thousand present in the body of the hall, would doubtless have followed the example set them on the platform, and individually congratulated Mr. Hatchet on his "splendid display of eloquence," but for the circumstance of the platform being only accessible by another door, which they knew to be locked.

Mr. Hatchet, having thus received the audible congratulations of his fellow-Socialists on the platform, and the inaudible, though not less real or cordial congratulations of those in the body of the room, arose from his seat, and turned about to the back of his chair, for the purpose of taking up and putting on (which he

plaudits were ringing in his ears, and resounding through the large hall, his imagination was fondly feasting itself on the national reputation he was sure to acquire, or, rather, had already acquired, by his maiden speech.

The audience having cheered the passage just quoted, till they could, literally, owing to physical exhaustion, cheer it no more, Mr. Hatchet resumed his address. "Yes, gentlemen," he continued, "the world has been too long the victim of the present anomalous and degrading state of things; and it is high time that some great effort were made to banish error of every kind from off the face of the earth, and to introduce the new and glorious era which our illustrious chairman has had the honour of being the first to bring to light. I am sure, gentlemen, that I can confidently rely on your cordial co-operation in the strenuous efforts we are determined to make to carry into practical effect the principles I have laid down in this imperfect address. (Loud and unanimous shouts of "You

may—you may "). Gentlemen, I fully anticipated that ready response. I am sure you firmly maintain with me—do you not, gentlemen?—that no man is responsible for his actions, or ought to be punished for them. (Energetic cries of "We do," burst from all parts of the meeting). I am confident that you cordially concur in the great principle, that the thief, constituted as society now is, and erroneously educated as mankind have been, is not a fit subject for blame, and ought not to be either punished by law, or virtually excluded from society because he commits felony. (Reiterated and vociferous cries of "We do"). I am no less persuaded, gentlemen, that you will all give a cordial response to the sentiment, that the felon is just as respectable a member of society as the most upright and moral man in it. (The deafening cheers which greeted the utterance of the sentiment, showed how orthodox it appeared to the meeting). For my own part, gentlemen, I here publicly declare in the

had fully resolved on doing in the most graceful possible manner) the handsome cloak which he had thrown over the chair when he commenced his oration. But, behold! no cloak was there. It had vanished. Mr. Hatchet first looked confounded, and then turned pale. For a few seconds he said nothing, but looked alternately at the vacant chair and the Socialists around him. When he had recovered the power of speech, he exclaimed, in accents which no language can describe, his eye looking unutterable things, "I'm ——, but they've stole my cloak. By *all* that's sacred, it's gone!" A universal shout of laughter burst from the assembled multitude, in the midst of which there was heard a voice—"Is there *anything* sacred, Mr. Hatchet?"

"Mr. Owen," resumed Mr. Hatchet, turning to the chairman, "do you mean to tell me that the person who has stolen my cloak knows nothing about the distinctions between right and wrong?"

“Ah, brother Hatchet,” replied Mr. Owen, with imperturbable gravity; “ah, brother Hatchet; come now, you know you’re a great wag.”

The remark of the father of Socialism was greeted with laughter and cheers.

“Ay, ay, Mr. Owen, it may be all very well for you to make light of the matter, but there’s nothing jocular in it to me.”

And the mover of the second resolution looked furiously indignant as he apostrophised the father of Socialism.

“Why, Mr. Hatchet,” remarked one of the Socialists on the platform, “it’s the greatest proof you could have of the *effect* of your speech. It forms a striking *illustration* of the power of your oratory. You are a *wery* persuasive speaker.”

“Yes,” echoed a shrill, penny-trumpet voice at the farther end of the hall, “it shows that Mr. Hatchet produced conviction in the minds of his auditors.”

Here a universal roar of laughter burst from the audience.

“Ay, and in their *fingers* too,” remarked another Socialist, in the centre of the hall.

“If I can only catch the rogue,” said Mr. Hatchet, drily, “we shall soon have a conviction of another kind—a conviction at the Old Bailey.”

“The person wot prigged your cloak, old boy, is not responsible for his actions,” cried a fourth.

“No, he aint,” responded a fifth.

“It was all the effect of a defective education,” remarked a sixth.

“Is the tailor paid, Mr. Hatchet?” asked a seventh.

“Or did you take it on tick, old ‘un?” inquired an eighth.

Renewed roars of laughter followed this display of Social wit, in the midst of which Mr. Hatchet forced his way to the door, muttering, in the extremity of his mortification, curses

loud and deep at the persons and principles of the Socialists. From that moment he cut all connexion with Mr. Owen and his disciples,—without the most slender probability of its ever being renewed. *Save him sight*

END OF VOL. I.







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